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THE LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,

M.P., D.C.L., &c.

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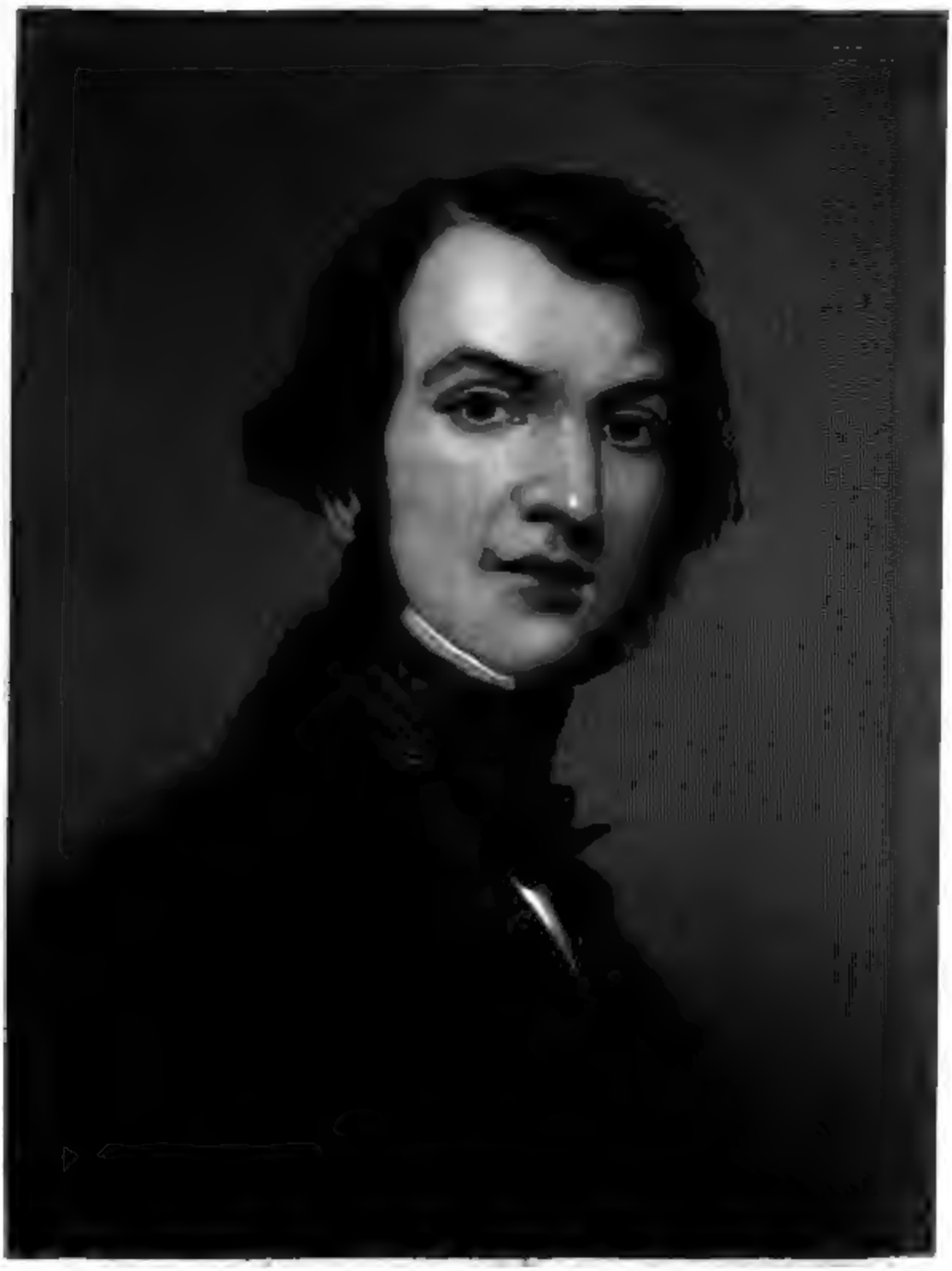

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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE,

M.P., D.C.L., &c.

BY

GEORGE BARNETT SMITH,

AUTHOR OF "SHELLEY: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY," "POETS AND NOVELISTS," &c.

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THE LIFE

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CHAPTER XVI.

ADVANCING OPINIONS AND FISCAL REFORMS.

Mr. Gladstone and Parliamentary Reform—Financial Statement of 1864—Growth of the Revenue—Decrease in the National Debt—Imports and Exports—Further Relief of Taxation—Favourable Reception of the Budget—Government Annuities and Life Insurances—Mr. Gladstone on the Working Classes and the Franchise—Important Declaration—Hostility to the Palmerston Government—Mr. Disraeli's 'No Confidence' Motion—Speech by Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Bernal Osborne on the Ministry—Mr. Disraeli's Motion rejected—The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Irish Church—Budget for 1865—Prosperous Condition of the Country—A large Surplus—Great Reduction in Taxation.

THE period of three years with which the two ensuing chapters are concerned, viz., that extending from 1864 to 1866 inclusive, is remarkable as showing the rapid development of Mr. Gladstone's views on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. In the first-named year he delivered a speech upon the franchise which filled the Conservative party with alarm, but correspondingly elevated the hopes of the Reform party. It was the

first note sounded in a conflict which, twelve months later, was to lose Mr. Gladstone his seat for Oxford University, and finally to culminate in the disruption of the Liberal Government. With the exception of this speech and of the budget, there was nothing to distinguish the session of 1864, or to give it a conspicuous place in the annals of legislation. The year was comparatively uneventful, and the country was at peace. Concurrently with a tranquil condition of public opinion was witnessed a striking advance in the material prosperity and general welfare of the people. The trade of Great Britain, as the official periodical reports demonstrated, continued to advance by those extraordinary 'leaps and bounds' which had marked its course since the first onslaught made upon the commercial restrictions in force twenty years before.

The financial statement for the year was brought forward on the 7th of April; and it was widely anticipated before its delivery that Mr. Gladstone would be able to announce further reductions in taxation. It was not until a later stage in our history that the results of Free Trade were seriously called in question by its strongest opponents. At the period of which we write, 'the effect of twenty years of Free Trade legislation, inaugurated by Sir Robert Peel in 1842, and carried on by his successors in office, had been such that, concurrently with the repeal of a long catalogue of duties and imposts which had previously fettered manufacturers, and excluded most valuable foreign products, the finances of the country presented

an aspect of abundance and stability almost without precedent in our history, and to which no foreign country could offer acomparison. In point of wealth and national credit, indeed, England stood almost alone at this time amongst the nations of the world.' Under the old system of Protection, this magnificent exhibition of strength, stability, and progress in the trade of the United Kingdom would have been an absolute impossibility.

Great solicitude was exhibited as to the distribution of the large surplus which was known to exist, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose, it was in a House closely packed in every part, peers, foreign Ministers, and other distinguished visitors crowding the places assigned to them, while in Westminster Hall there was an assembly which would have filled the Strangers' Gallery three times over. Often as Mr. Gladstone had performed this annual financial feat, there appeared to be no diminution in the interest with which the budget oration was regarded by the public. The Chancellor of the Exchequer began by referring to the condition of the country in 1862-3, when there was a deficient harvest, and when Ireland and Lancashire were suffering from unusual pressure and distress; circumstances had improved somewhat in 1863-4, but still not to such a degree as to make the financial year completely favourable. The actual expenditure that year was £67,056,000, being a million and a quarter less—spread over the different departments—than had been authorised by Parliament. The revenue of the year was £70,003,561, showing a

surplus of nearly £3,000,000; but from this was to be taken the expenditure on fortifications, viz., £800,000. Deducting this from the surplus it still stood at a large figure. The real diminution of taxes in the three last years had been £6,638,000. The revenue had decreased by only £1,760,000, so that, taking reduction of taxation into consideration, it had actually increased, in round numbers, by £5,000,000. The revenue had grown since the year 1859 at the rate of £1,200,000, and since 1853 still over the rate of a million per annum. With regard to the liquidation of debt over the last year, Mr. Gladstone stated that a million of Exchequer bonds had been paid off, and other liquidations of the capital of the debt had been effected, which amounted to upwards of three millions. The sum paid for terminable annuities in liquidation of debt was £1,400,000. The decrease in the National Debt since 1855 was £69,000,000, and the charge for interest had now decreased by about six millions a year. Dealing next with our imports and exports, he showed how within three years they had enormously increased. The total exports last year, including foreign and colonial exports, were £195,000,000, while the exports and imports together for last year were £444,950,000. This enormous movement of British trade represented nearly a million and a half of money for every working day of the year, and the great increase had taken place since that period when the removal of trammels on trade had been the policy of Parliament. These facts not only demonstrated the

vigorous prosperity of the country, but were a pledge that England was to be the champion of peace and justice against all the world. There had undoubtedly been other elements working towards the attainment of this great end, but it was a remarkable fact that at those times, when the Legislature acted in the direction towards the liberation of commerce, the greatest results had followed. In 1853 and 1860, for example, when this policy was pursued, the exports had risen enormously as compared with the respective years preceding. Mr. Gladstone admitted, with respect to the effect of the paper duty, that there had been a great increase in the import of paper, but there were no means of ascertaining that there had been a proportionate decrease in the product of the British manufacturer. Still, there had been an immense increase in the demand for the materials for paper-making, while there had been a considerable increase in the export of British-made paper; the price had been reduced beyond the amount indicated by the duty; the diminution in the number of paper-makers, which had been going on until the repeal of the duty, had absolutely stopped; the expense of manufacture had greatly decreased, and all these facts must be taken as proofs that the trade had not suffered to the extent predicted and asserted. An arrangement for a reduction of the duty on rags was in progress by France. Considering next the spirit duties, he found that there had been an increase in the receipts of above £800,000. The export trade in spirits

had increased. There was a change taking place in the national taste for milder liquors. As compared with 1859, there had been an increase of about 55 per cent. in the consumption of wine; the same thing occurred with regard to tobacco. Our total imports from France had more than doubled since 1859, while the exports from England thither had risen from about £9,000,000 to about £22,000,000. Another favourable point in the condition of the country was that, excluding Lancashire, pauperism, if not decreasing, was at least stationary.

Dealing with the estimates for 1864–65, Mr. Gladstone stated that the total calculated revenue was £69,460,000, and the total expenditure £66,890,000—yielding a surplus of £2,570,000. A sum of £10,000, however, would be required for various minor changes and modifications which he enumerated; and the surplus left to dispose of would be £2,560,000. There were, of course, many strong claims for the application of this surplus. First and foremost, the largest and most important reduction he proposed was in the article of sugar, which he held to have the greatest claim to the consideration of the House. At present there was a classified scale of duty on sugar, and opinion and authority were in favour of such a duty in preference to a uniform charge. After detailing plans of classification which had been mooted, he said he desired that that form of duty should be adopted which should least interfere with the natural course of trade. Mr. Gladstone then stated the various reductions that would be made, the effect of which would be to place

the sugar duty at 1s. per cwt. lower than it had ever been. This alteration would cause a diminution of revenue at once of £1,701,900, but the net actual loss for the coming year would be £1,330,000. The surplus would thus be reduced to £1,230,000. There was no intention of proposing a reduction in the malt duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer then took up the subject of the income-tax, and once more stated his belief that the existence of the tax as a permanent duty was inconsistent with the achievement of a judicious public economy—an object towards which, despite the great and growing prosperity of the country, considering the co-existence of large pauperism with that prosperity, it was the duty of Parliament carefully to direct its attention and its efforts. He did not then ask the House to remodel or to abolish the income-tax, but he proposed to make a reduction of one penny in the amount. The immediate loss by this reduction would be £800,000, and the ultimate loss £1,200,000. This would leave a surplus of £430,000. It was proposed to reduce the duty on fire insurances from 3s. to 1s. 6d., so far as stock-in-trade was concerned; and with a view to test the principle of recovery of the revenue after reduction of duty, which had been so strenuously asserted, the reduction would take place from 1st July. The financial result of this would not be a very heavy loss. The surplus ultimately remaining after the various reductions he had specified, would be only £238,000. Such were the Government proposals. He trusted they would meet with acceptance, and that the House would re-

ceive them as pledges, on the part of the Ministry, of an earnest desire to co-operate with the Legislature in carrying yet further forward those purposes, the steady prosecution of which had already done so much for the strength and security of England, for the comfort and happiness of the people, for the honour of the age in which they lived, and for the hopes they entertained on behalf of the times that were to come.

The budget—which was equivalent to a declaration of policy on behalf of the Government, a policy in which peace, progress, and economy were the watch-words—was most favourably received. Notices of opposition on minor points were given, but Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were ultimately adopted without a division. Notwithstanding the continuous assaults which had been made upon the fiscal policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, its success could not be denied, and the author of it was now the chief mainstay of the Government. From whatever quarter of the House criticism arose, Mr. Gladstone met it readily and successfully, showing an unprecedented familiarity with all branches of the public industry and the public revenue.

A motion still further to reduce the fire insurance duty was negatived. On the order of the day for going into consideration of the proposed reduction in the sugar duties, Colonel Barttelot moved an amendment, 'That the consideration of these duties be postponed until the House has had an opportunity of considering the expediency of the reduction of the duty upon malt.' During the discussion on this

amendment, a member of the Opposition advocated the re-imposition of the paper duty, upon which the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose and protested against all such idea, referring in most laudatory terms to the establishment of a cheap press, and hailing the benefits it had conferred on the community. The surplus was totally inadequate to a substantial reduction of the malt tax, and if that subject were approached at all it ought not to be in a petty and inadequate manner, or without considering the relation of the tax to the whole system of taxation on the other beverages of the country. Colonel Barttelot's motion was rejected by 247 votes to 99. A subsequent motion by Mr. Morritt, 'That in case of any modification of the indirect taxation of the country the excise on malt requires consideration,' was lost by 166 to 118. Mr. Gladstone, however, brought forward a proposal, by way of concession to the agriculturists, for the remission of so much of the duty as had been hitherto levied upon malt used for the consumption of cattle. The bill was variously viewed by Conservative members, but after considerable debate it ultimately passed both Houses. Two amendments were proposed to Mr. Gladstone's proposed re-arrangement of the sugar duties, but both were defeated.

Early in this session the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a bill for amending the law relating to the purchase of Government annuities through the medium of savings-banks, and to enable the granting of life insurances by the Government. It was explained that, up to the introduction of the bill, sums could be re-

ceived for deferred annuities only in large amounts, and the objects of the measure were to enable them to take smaller amounts through the medium of the post-office savings-banks. No hostility was at first shown to the bill, but subsequently it was violently opposed. On moving the committal of the measure, Mr. Gladstone demonstrated the groundlessness of the fears which had arisen respecting it. The bill prohibited nothing: it simply offered certain facilities for self-help to the poorer classes of the community. The plan was both safe and just. The Friendly Societies, however, raised a strong opposition to the scheme, and their supporters in the House inveighed against what they termed a 'paternal Government.' The author of the proposal had the effective retort that during his long public life he had never received so many letters as he had upon this measure, from various classes of the community, all expressing approval of, and gratitude for, the bill. After the rejection of an amendment directed against the whole scheme, the bill was referred to a select committee, which, while recommending slight modifications, reported favourably to the House. The Opposition collapsed, and the bill passed the Lower House amid warm approval on both sides. In the House of Lords, also, it was regarded as a measure 'conceived in the true interest of the working classes.' It became law, and it has since been generally acknowledged as one of the most valuable products of a session not very prolific in legislative reforms. Its singularly successful operation may readily

be traced from year to year by all who are interested in the welfare and progress of the working classes.

It was during the debate on Mr. Baines's bill for lowering the borough franchise that the Chancellor of the Exchequer startled the House by his declaration upon the question of Reform. Mr. Baines's resolution was defeated by 272 against 216, but it was generally admitted that Mr. Gladstone's speech had given a great impetus to the movement. The right hon. gentleman, in the outset, signified cordial concurrence in the proposition that there ought to be, not a wholesale, but a sensible and considerable addition to that portion of the working classes—at present almost infinitesimal—which was in possession of the franchise. 'We are told,' he continued, 'that the working classes don't agitate; but is it desirable that we should wait until they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes upon any political subject whatever is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any Parliamentary movement, but, on the contrary, is to be deprecated, and, if possible, prevented by wise and provident measures. An agitation by the working classes is not like an agitation by the classes above them having leisure. The agitation of the classes having leisure is easily conducted. Every hour of their time has not a money value; their wives and children are not dependent on the application of those hours of labour. When a working man finds himself in such a condition that he must abandon that daily labour on which he is strictly dependent for

his daily bread, it is only because then, in railway language, the danger signal is turned on, and because he feels a strong necessity for action, and a distrust of the rulers who have driven him to that necessity. The present state of things, I rejoice to say, does not indicate that distrust; but if we admit that, we must not allege the absence of agitation on the part of the working classes as a reason why the Parliament of England and the public mind of England should be indisposed to entertain the discussion of this question.' He denied that there was that special virtue in the nature of the middle classes which justified them in drawing a marked distinction between them and a select portion of the working classes, so far as related to the exercise of the franchise. He advocated the extension of the franchise, on the ground that it would tend to advance that unity of classes which was now in happy progress throughout the country.

The general feeling in connection with this speech was that if the Liberal party had failed in its duty on the subject of Reform in the existing Parliament, after the utterances of Mr. Gladstone that state of things must undergo a change. Mr. Gladstone's declaration had naturally a great effect upon the country.

On the 4th of July the hostility to the Palmerston Government, chiefly on the ground of its foreign policy, reached its full height in a formal encounter between the Ministry and the Opposition. Mr. Disraeli brought forward on the day named his 'no confidence' motion, as follows:—'To thank her Majesty for having directed

the correspondence on Denmark and Germany, and the protocol of the Conference recently assembled in London, to be laid before Parliament; to assure her Majesty that we have heard with deep concern that the sittings of the Conference have been brought to a close without accomplishing the important purpose for which it was convened; and to express to her Majesty our great regret that, while the course pursued by her Majesty's Government has failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the integrity and independence of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the capitals of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace.' Mr. Kinglake proposed to substitute the following words as an amendment to the last sentence of the resolution:—'To express the satisfaction with which we have learned that at this conjuncture her Majesty has been advised to abstain from armed interference in the war now going on between Denmark and the German Powers.' Mr. Disraeli, in a speech which was loudly cheered by his supporters, maintained that the time had come when Ministers should no longer be allowed to escape their responsibility.

Mr. Gladstone at once accepted the responsibility cast upon the Government, and proceeded to rebut the accusations made by the leader of the Opposition. It was the very first occasion, he said, on which the British House of Commons had been called upon, for the sake of displacing a Government, to record the degradation of the country. Why could not the right hon. gentleman speak plainly in his motion? The terms of the

resolution were nothing better than an echo of the almost ribald language of a few obscure journals of Germany. It was from that source that this intended Minister derived his inspiration. The Chancellor of the Exchequer thus concluded his stirring reply :—

'Why does not the right hon. gentleman adopt the language of our forefathers, who, when they were dissatisfied with a Government, addressed the Crown, and prayed that the Government might be dismissed? They said boldly that the conduct of the Government was open to such and such charges, and they prayed that other men might be put in their places. But the right hon. gentleman was afraid to raise that issue. He has, indeed, plucked up courage to propose this motion; but why has he not done it in the proper constitutional form in which votes of want of confidence have hitherto been drawn? Never before, as far as I know, has party spirit led gentlemen in this country to frame a motion which places on record that which must be regarded as dishonourable to the nation. I go back to the time of Sir R. Walpole, of Lord North, and Mr. Fox, but nowhere do we find such a sterile and jejune affair as this resolution. Those charges were written in legible and plain terms; but the right hon. gentleman substitutes language which might indeed be sufficient for the purpose of rendering it impossible for the Government to continue in office, but which cannot transfix them without its sting first passing through the honour of England. For the reasons I have stated I look forward with cheerfulness to the issue which has been raised with regard to our conduct. Nay, more, I feel the most confident anticipation that both the House and the country will approve of the course taken in this difficult negotiation by her Majesty's Government, and that they will reject a motion which both prudence and patriotism must alike emphatically condemn.'

In the course of the debate, which was very protracted, Mr. Bernal Osborne grew amusingly sarcastic at the expense of the Government, though he paid at the same time a great compliment to Mr. Gladstone. He likened the Cabinet to a museum of curiosities, in which there were some birds of rare and noble plumage, both alive and stuffed. There had been a difficulty, un-

fortunately, in keeping up the breed, and it was found necessary to cross it with the famous Peelites. 'I will do them the justice to say that they have a very great and able Minister among them in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and it is to his measures alone that they owe the little popularity and the little support they get from this Liberal party.' Describing Mr. Milner Gibson, the hon. gentleman said he was like some 'fly in amber,' and the wonder was 'how the devil he got there.' Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright must have been disappointed in this 'young man from the country.' He had become insolent and almost quarrelsome under the guidance of the noble lord. Should that Parliament decide on terminating its own and their existence, they would find consolation that the funeral oration would be pronounced by Mr. Newdegate, and that some friendly hand would inscribe on their mausoleum, 'Rest and be thankful.' The Government having accepted Mr. Kinglake's amendment, a division was taken, with the following result:—For Mr. Disraeli's motion, 295; for the amendment, 313—majority for Ministers, 18.

In the House of Commons, during a debate which occurred at the close of March, 1865, Mr. Gladstone delivered an important speech in connection with the Irish Church. Mr. Dillwyn having proposed a motion, 'That the present position of the Irish Church Establishment is unsatisfactory, and calls for the early attention of her Majesty's Government,' Mr. Gladstone rose and said that, although the Government were unable

to agree to the resolution, they were not prepared to deny the abstract truth of the former part of it. They could not assert that the present position of the Establishment was satisfactory. At the close of a lengthy speech, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that he could come to no other conclusion than that the Irish Church, as she then stood, was in a false position. It was much more difficult, however, to decide upon the practical aspect of the question, and no one had ventured to propose the remedy required for the existing state of things. This question raised a whole nest of political problems; for while the vast majority of the Irish people were opposed to the maintenance of large and liberal endowments for a fragment of the population, they repudiated any desire to appropriate these endowments, and firmly rejected all idea of receiving a State provision for themselves. How could the Government, in view of these facts, substitute a satisfactory for an admittedly unsatisfactory state of things? They were unable to do so. Consequently, 'we feel that we ought to decline to follow the hon. gentleman into the lobby, and declare that it is the duty of the Government to give their early attention to the subject; because if we gave a vote to that effect we should be committing one of the gravest offences of which a Government could be guilty—namely, giving a deliberate and solemn promise to the country, which promise it would be out of our power to fulfil.' The debate was adjourned, but was not resumed during the session. Some months later, in a letter to Dr. Hannah, Warden of Trinity College,

Glenalmond, Mr. Gladstone gave his reasons for declining at that time to entertain the question of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church.

'First, because the question is remote, and apparently out of all bearing on the practical politics of the day, I think it would be for me worse than superfluous to determine upon any scheme, or basis of a scheme, with respect to it. Secondly, because it is difficult; even if I anticipated any likelihood of being called upon to deal with it, I should think it right to take no decision beforehand on the mode of dealing with the difficulties. But the first reason is that which chiefly weighs. . . . . I think I have stated strongly my sense of the responsibility attaching to the opening of such a question, except in a state of things which gave promise of satisfactorily closing it. For this reason it is that I have been so silent about the matter, and may probably be so again; but I could not, as a Minister and as member for Oxford University, allow it to be debated an indefinite number of times and remain silent. One thing, however, I may add, because I think it a clear landmark. In any measure dealing with the Irish Church, I think (though I scarcely expect ever to be called on to share in such a measure) the Act of Union must be recognised, and must have important consequences, especially with reference to the position of the hierarchy.'

This question, however, was already rapidly pressing forward for settlement—how rapidly Mr. Gladstone himself seemed not to be aware of. Yet the Act of Disestablishment was to proceed from his own hand within a very brief period.

The budget this year was brought forward on the 27th of April, and the prosperous condition of the finances of the country again justified the hopes of a reduction of taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer began his statement by remarking upon the contrast between the opening and closing circumstances of the existing Parliament.

'When the Parliament met, we had been involved—although we did not know it at the time—in a costly and difficult war with China. The harvest

of the year which succeeded, was the worst that had been known for half a century. The recent experience of war had led to costly, extensive, and somewhat uncertain reconstructions; and clouds hung over the Continent of Europe, while the Italian war had terminated in such a manner as to occasion vague but serious alarms in the public mind. Since that period those clouds have moved westward across the Atlantic, and have burst in a tempest, perhaps the wildest that ever devastated a civilised country—a tempest of war, distinguished, indeed, by the exhibition of many of the most marvellous and extraordinary qualities of valour, heroism, and perseverance; and on the whole, perhaps, no scenes have been so entirely painful as that of which the intelligence has last reached us, which now causes one thrill of horror throughout Europe.* But so far as this country is concerned, we have been mercifully spared. We see the state of the public mind tranquil and reassured, and the condition of the country generally prosperous and satisfactory. The financial history of the Parliament has been a remarkable one. It has raised a larger revenue than, I believe, at any period, whether of peace or war, was ever raised by taxation. After taking into account the changes in the value of money within an equal time, the expenditure of the Parliament has been upon a scale that has never before been reached in time of peace. The amount and variety of the changes introduced into our financial legislation have been greater than within a like number of years at any former time. And I may say, lastly, that it has enjoyed the distinction that, although no Parliament ever completes the full term of its legal existence, yet this is the seventh time on which you have been called upon to make provision for the financial exigencies of the country.'

Mr. Gladstone then proceeded with the details of his statement. The actual expenditure for 1864–65 had been less than the estimate by about £611,000. The estimate of the revenue for the year 1864 was £67,128,000, while the amount received was £70,313,000, showing an increase of £3,185,000. The actual expenditure of the past year had been £66,461,000, and the revenue being £70,313,000, there was thus a surplus of £3,852,000, or, subjecting it to all deduc-

* The assassination of President Lincoln.

tions, of £3,200,000. The debt paid off in the year had amounted to £5,240,000, while, deducting the charge for fortifications, the real diminution was over £4,000,000. Since 1859 the National Debt had diminished by three millions per annum, and there was a total reduction of nearly eighteen millions during the present Parliament. Dealing with the trade of the country, he observed that the paper trade was in a satisfactory condition, and that our commerce with France continued to increase, both in exports and imports. Although nominally the trade of France had increased in greater proportion than that of this country, yet relatively, and looking to the steady progress of the latter, that had not been the case; while in comparison with Belgium and Holland it had considerably increased. He came to the conclusion that immense advantage had resulted to our trade in the removal of bars, fetters, and impediments from the path of human industry in this empire, as well as in the union of class with class and, he hoped, of nation with nation. Not for the first time, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that in such a retrospect he could not forbear rendering a tribute to the character and ability of the man who was the main instrument of these great commercial changes—Mr. Cobden. With regard to the charges for 1865–66, Mr. Gladstone stated that the total expenditure was estimated at £66,139,000, being considerably less than for 1864–65. The total estimated revenue was £70,170,000, and there was thus left a surplus of £4,031,000. Coming to the question of the disposal of

this surplus, after enumerating various minor reductions, there remained, said the right hon. gentleman, the question of the malt tax. The total abolition of the duty would be the death-warrant of our whole system of indirect taxation, and the practical question was, what reduction could be made? He allowed that the tax upon beer from the malt duty was 20 per cent. How much of the malt duty must be taken off to reduce the price of beer one farthing a quart? A little less than one-half. The loss to the Exchequer by such a reduction would be, in the first year, £2,489,000; in the second year, £3,360,000. Now, looking at the relative taxation of malt, as compared with other potable articles, he found that while beer was taxed 20 per cent., the common wines which entered into competition with beer were taxed 50 per cent. There was no argument in favour of the repeal to be derived from any languor in the consumption of beer; on the contrary, there had been an increase in the use of this national drink as compared with spirits. But if beer ought to be taxed more lightly than wines or spirits, he confidently asserted that tea ought to be more heavily taxed than beer. The tax on a barrel of beer was 20 per cent., that on a chest of tea was not less than 40 per cent., and tea was entitled to a preference in the reduction of duty. He would, however, give the maltster the option of having the duty charged by weight instead of by measure, which would operate as a relief to the growers of medium and lower qualities of barley. He did not say that he looked forward to

an indefinite imposition of the malt tax, but at the present time a large portion of the surplus could not be applied to the reduction of the malt tax, especially as the incidence of the income-tax remained to be finally settled. The diminution of the duty on tea by 6d. a pound would reduce the price to the consumer by 20 per cent.; the loss to the revenue would be upwards of £2,375,000, but looking to recuperation by consumption, in the present year it would only be £1,808,000. Touching upon the income-tax, he observed that it was now at the lowest point which it had ever reached; but it was proposed to reduce the existing charge of 6d. in the pound by one-third of that amount. The effect would be to reduce the tax to a total of £5,200,000. Its final adjustment might be dealt with by the new Parliament, but if it was thought desirable to retain the income-tax, 4d. in the pound was the rate at which it might well be kept in time of peace. The reduction of £3,518,000 on tea and income-tax left a margin of the surplus, enabling it to be applied to the duty on fire insurance, and a reduction in conformity with a resolution already passed by the House upon this subject, would be made to 1s. 6d. from the 25th of June; while a reduction would be made in the shilling duty on the policy to a penny stamp. There would be a relief on fire insurance of £520,000. The total reduction of taxation amounted to £5,420,000. The loss in the year 1865-6 would be £3,778,000, and in the following year £1,417,000, making a total for the two years of £5,195,000. There would be an ultimate

surplus this year of £253,000, and any invasion of this he earnestly deprecated. There were several claims for a reduction of duty, but he trusted that the House would agree that that of tea was paramount, and he hoped generally that the measures of the Government, in dealing with the financial situation, would be acceptable to the House and the nation.

The budget met with less opposition than had been encountered by any of its predecessors, and gained the warm approval of the country, notwithstanding the inevitable demonstration made in connection with the malt tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's fiscal proposals were embodied in a bill, which passed through the House with scarcely any delay. The decreasing expenditure on the army and navy estimates was viewed with general and very lively satisfaction. Notwithstanding that the House and the country at large had become accustomed to Mr. Gladstone's masterly manipulation of the national finances, the magnitude of the remissions of taxation in the budget of 1865 excited feelings of pleasant and universal surprise. These financial proposals demonstrated not only the soundness of the calculations made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but also the continued prosperity of the country.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. GLADSTONE'S REJECTION AT OXFORD—THE REFORM BILL OF 1866.

Dissolution of Parliament—Oxford University Election—Defeat of Mr. Gladstone—Character of the Election—Public Opinion thereon—The Election in South Lancashire—The Chancellor of the Exchequer at Manchester and Liverpool—Return of Mr. Gladstone—Death of Lord Palmerston—Reconstruction of the Ministry—The new Leader in the Commons—The Budget of 1866—Scheme for the Reduction of the National Debt—Disaffection in Ireland—Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act—Church Rates—Debate on Continental Affairs—Mr. Gladstone introduces the Government Reform Bill—Digest of the Measure—It is attacked by Mr. Lowe and others—Mr. Bright's Rebuke of Mr. Horsman—The Adullamites—The Chancellor of the Exchequer at Liverpool—The Reform Struggle continued—Amendments to the Ministerial Scheme—Eloquent Speech by Mr. Gladstone—His Relations with the Liberal Party—Government Victory—Exciting Scene in the House—Redistribution of Seats Bill—Further Reform Debates—The Government defeated on Lord Dunkellin's Amendment—Resignation of the Ministry—A Derby Administration formed.

On the 6th of July, 1865, Parliament—having, in a constitutional sense, reached its full term—was prorogued, with a view to an immediate dissolution. The Prime Minister had announced some time previously that this day had been selected for remitting to the constituencies their legislative trust; and many members had issued their addresses for re-election in anticipation of the issue of the new writs. Yet there was no 'burning' question upon which the Palmerston Government appealed to the country for a continuance of its confidence. Parliament had expired in a natural manner, and there were few

contests looked forward to with any extraordinary degree of interest. With the exception of the elections for the Metropolitan constituencies, there was, indeed, but one electoral struggle which the country watched with peculiar solicitude, viz., that in which Mr. Gladstone's seat for Oxford University was threatened. It was not a little singular that, while the great body of the people —Liberal and Conservative alike—admitted that the stability of the Ministry was in great part due to the sagacious and statesmanlike measures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, his re-election was widely felt to be most uncertain. As a natural consequence, the eyes of the whole country were turned in the direction of Oxford. By the irony of fate, a Liberal measure was destined to operate most injuriously against Mr. Gladstone. Only in the previous Parliament an Act was passed, on the instigation of a well-known member of the Liberal party, by which the election for the Universities was authorised to be made by means of voting papers, transmitted through the post or otherwise to the Vice-Chancellors, and a period of five days was allowed for keeping open the poll. An uncompromising Conservative candidate was found at Oxford, in the person of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, to oppose Mr. Gladstone, and the friends of both candidates agreed to give their second vote to Sir W. Heathcote, whose return was not opposed. The nomination took place on the 13th of July, the proceedings being conducted in Latin. Mr. Gladstone was proposed by Dr. Liddell, the Dean of Christ Church; the Warden of All Souls, in an oration of some length, pro-

posed Sir William Heathcote; and the Public Orator, in the absence of the President of St. John's, proposed Mr. Gathorne Hardy. At the close of the first day's poll Mr. Gladstone was in a minority of six as compared with his opponent, Mr. Hardy. The last vote registered for Gladstone on the first day caused some amount of commotion. The *Standard* of the following morning stated that the Vice-Chancellor was in 'the act of receiving a long string of proxies for Gladstone when a voter appeared to give his vote in person. On being asked his name he gave that of "Samuel Wilberforce," on which one of the gentlemen appointed to watch the proceedings on the Conservative side, inquired, with all due courtesy, if his lordship was aware that the House of Commons had passed a resolution to the effect that peers of Parliament could not vote in the election of members of the Lower House. The Bishop replied that he was perfectly aware of the resolution in question, and again tendered his vote, which (the objection not being pressed) was received and duly registered.' Several other peers recorded their votes at an early stage for Mr. Gladstone, including the Bishop of Durham and Earl Cowper. On the third day Mr. Gladstone's minority had increased to 74, and on the fourth to 230. A circular was now issued by Sir J. T. Coleridge, chairman of the right hon. gentleman's committee, intimating to the electors still unpledged that there was reason to fear the seat was in danger, and pressing upon them the duty of recording their votes in favour of the Chancellor of the Exche-

quer. 'The Committee do not scruple to advocate his cause on grounds above the common level of politics. They claim for him the gratitude due to one whose public life has for eighteen years reflected a lustre on the University herself. They confidently invite you to consider whether his pure and exalted character, his splendid abilities, and his eminent services to Church and State, do not constitute the highest of all qualifications for an academical seat, and entitle him to be judged by his constituents as he will assuredly be judged by posterity.' On the last day of the contest the excitement waned, as it was found that Mr. Gladstone had little chance of success. He lessened the majority against him, however, and the numbers were finally declared as follows:—Heathcote, 3,236; Hardy, 1,904; Gladstone, 1,724—majority of Hardy over Gladstone, 180. The total number of votes recorded was 3,850, being nearly double that at any former election. While Mr. Gladstone received 415 plumpers, only 43 were registered for Sir W. Heathcote, and but 16 for Mr. Hardy.*

Mr. Gladstone's defeat was shown to be due to the non-residents. The resident body consisted of some

* Amongst the distinguished voters who supported the Chancellor of the Exchequer were the following:—the Bishops of Durham, Oxford, and Chester, Earl Cowper, the Dean of Westminster, the Dean of Christchurch, Professors Farrar, Rolleston, and Max Müller, the Dean of Lichfield, Sir J. T. Coleridge, Sir Henry Thompson, the Rev. Dr. Jelf, the Bodleian Librarian, Sir. F. T. Palgrave, the Right Hon. S. Lushington, the Dean of St. Paul's, the Rev. John Keble, the Principal of Brasenose, the Dean of Peterborough, Prof. Conington, the Rev. J. B. Mozley, Mr. E. A. Freeman, Chief Justice Erle, Dr. Pusey, Professor Jowett, Mr. Cardwell, the Marquis of Kildare, and the Rector of Lincoln.

250 persons, and of these 155 voted or paired for the right hon. gentleman, while only 89 voted or paired against him. Mr. Hardy had a majority in three colleges only—St. John's, Magdalen, and Lincoln—all the important colleges being strongly on Mr. Gladstone's side. The heads of houses were nearly equally divided, 12 voting for Mr. Gladstone and 11 for Mr. Hardy; but the professors were strongly for the former, 24 giving him their support, while only 10 voted for his opponent. Three-fourths of the tutors and lecturers were also on the side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so that in this celebrated contest it was not really *Academic* Oxford which rejected him. He lost his seat through that great body of voters who had little sympathy with the Oxford of 1865, as a writer at the time pointed out. The Rector of Lincoln (the Rev. Mark Pattison) stated that of the ten Fellows of that college, seven polled for Mr. Gladstone, and two only for Mr. Hardy. Half the total number of members of Convocation on the college books voted for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

While the rejection of Mr. Gladstone by the University of Oxford was regarded in some quarters as a signal triumph of Conservative reaction, in other respects it was felt that the opposition offered to him was a most mistaken stroke of Tory policy. Though he always courageously acted upon his convictions, so long as he retained his seat for Oxford University he must have remained to some extent fettered—he could not altogether shake off the silent but deep and unmis-

takable influence which such a connection must necessarily exercise. Once the ties had been broken which bound him to his *Alma Mater*, and Mr. Gladstone felt like a man who breathes the fresh mountain air after a close confinement in the crowded city. There were now many questions whose consideration he could approach without the sense of an invisible but restraining influence. By the whole Liberal party throughout the country his rejection was immediately regarded with feelings of exultation—much as (for some reasons) they had desired his return for that distinguished seat of learning which he had represented so long and so well. By a large class of non-resident voters Mr. Gladstone was viewed as too clever to be a safe man, and it was not anticipated that Mr. Gathorne Hardy would forfeit the confidence of this body by any eccentricities of genius. The result of this election had another important effect. 'The enemies of the University,' observed the *Times*, 'will make the most of her disgrace. It has hitherto been supposed that a learned constituency was to some extent exempt from the vulgar motives of party spirit, and capable of forming a higher estimate of statesmanship than common tradesmen or tenant-farmers. It will now stand on record that they have deliberately sacrificed a representative who combined the very highest qualifications, moral and intellectual, for an academical seat, to party spirit, and party spirit alone. Mr. Gladstone's brilliant public career, his great academical distinctions and literary attainments, his very subtlety and sympathy with

ideas for their own sake, mark him out beyond all living men for such a position. However progressive in purely secular politics, he has ever shown himself a staunch and devoted Churchman wherever Church doctrine or ecclesiastical rights were concerned. . . Henceforth Mr. Gladstone will belong to the country, but no longer to the University. Those Oxford influences and traditions which have so deeply coloured his views, and so greatly interfered with his better judgment, must gradually lose their hold on him.' A yet more pronounced expression of opinion came from the *Daily News*, the organ of advanced Liberal thought:—

'Mr. Gladstone's career as a statesman will certainly not be arrested, nor Mr. Gathorne Hardy's capacity be enlarged, by the number of votes which Tory squires or Tory parsons may inflict upon Lord Derby's cheerful and fluent subaltern, or withhold from Lord Palmerston's brilliant colleague. The late Sir Robert Peel was but the chief of a party until, admonished by one ostracism, he became finally emancipated by another. Then, as now, the statesman who was destined to give up to mankind what was never meant for the barren service of a party, could say to the honest bigots who rejected him—

"I banish you:
There is a world elsewhere."

Mediocrity will not be turned into genius, honest and good-natured insignificance into force, fluency into eloquence, if the resident and non-resident Toryism of the University of Oxford should prefer the safe and

sound Mr. Hardy to the illustrious Minister whom all Europe envies us, whose name is a household word in every political assembly in the world.'

Such was the view taken by Liberals generally of Mr. Gladstone's defeat. How it was regarded by one important body in the Church may be gathered from a letter which Dr. Pusey addressed to the editor of the *Churchman*, a journal which looked with the liveliest satisfaction upon the return of Mr. Hardy. 'You are naturally rejoicing,' wrote the Regius Professor of Hebrew, 'over the rejection of Mr. Gladstone, which I mourn. Some of those who concurred in that election, or who stood aloof, will, I fear, mourn hereafter with a double sorrow because they were the cause of that rejection. I, of course, speak only for myself, with whatever degree of anticipation may be the privilege of years. Yet, on the very ground that I may very probably not live to see the issue of the momentous future now hanging over the Church, let me, through you, express to those friends through whom I have been separated, who love the Church in itself, and not the accident of Establishment, my conviction that we should do ill to identify the interests of the Church with any political party; that we have questions before us, compared with which that of the Establishment (important as it is in respect to the possession of our parish churches) is as nothing. The grounds alleged against Mr. Gladstone bore at the utmost upon the Establishment. The Establishment might perish, and the Church but come forth the purer.

If the Church were corrupted, the Establishment would become a curse in proportion to its influence. As that conflict will thicken, Oxford, I think, will learn to regret her rude severance from one so loyal to the Church, to the faith, and to God.' The author of the *Christian Year* also remained firm to the cause of Mr. Gladstone in 1865, as he had done in 1847.

On the close of the poll at Oxford on the 18th of July, Mr. Gladstone wrote the following valedictory address to the members of Convocation:—'After an arduous connection of eighteen years, I bid you, respectfully, farewell. My earnest purpose to serve you, my many faults and shortcomings, the incidents of the political relation between the University and myself, established in 1847, so often questioned in vain, and now, at length, finally dissolved, I leave to the judgment of the future. It is one imperative duty, and one alone, which induces me to trouble you with these few parting words—the duty of expressing my profound and lasting gratitude for indulgence as generous, and for support as warm and enthusiastic in itself, and as honourable from the character and distinctions of those who have given it, as has, in my belief, ever been accorded by any constituency to any representative.' Like his illustrious leader, Sir Robert Peel, when rejected by the University of Oxford, Mr. Gladstone was now driven to appeal to a different kind of constituency. The election in South Lancashire was still pending, and at the nomination on the preceding day the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been

proposed, in view of eventualities at Oxford. Arriving in Manchester on the 18th, Mr. Gladstone had a conference with the Liberal Election Committee, and immediately afterwards issued his address to the electors as follows:—'I appear before you as a candidate for the suffrages of your division of my native county. Time forbids me to enlarge on the numerous topics which justly engage the public interest. I will bring them all to a single head. You are conversant—few so much so—with the legislation of the last thirty-five years. You have seen, you have felt its results. You cannot fail to have observed the verdict which the country generally has, within the last eight days, pronounced upon the relative claims and positions of the two great political Parties with respect to that legislation in the past, and to the prospective administration of public affairs. I humbly, but confidently, without the least disparagement to many excellent persons, from whom I have the misfortune frequently to differ, ask you to give your powerful voice in confirmation of that verdict, and to pronounce with significance as to the direction in which you desire the wheels of the State to move. Before these words can be read, I hope to be among you in the hives of your teeming enterprise.'

Mr. Gladstone first appeared on the Manchester Exchange; and from thence he proceeded to the Free Trade Hall, which, though capable of holding many thousands of persons, was densely packed within a few minutes of the doors being opened. 'At last, my friends,' he began his address, 'I am come

among you—and I am come, to use an expression which has become very famous, and is not likely to be forgotten, I am come among you "unmuzzled."' Here the cheering was so enthusiastic and prolonged that for some time the speaker could not proceed. Quiet having been restored, the right hon. gentleman continued:—

'After an anxious struggle of eighteen years, during which the unbounded devotion and indulgence of my friends maintained me in the arduous position of representative of the University of Oxford, I have been driven from my seat. . . . . I have loved the University with a deep and passionate love, and as long as I breathe, that attachment will continue; if my affection is of the smallest advantage to that great, that ancient, that noble institution, that advantage, such as it is, and it is most insignificant, Oxford will possess as long as I live. But don't mistake the issue which has been raised. The University has at length, after eighteen years of self-denial, been drawn by what I might, perhaps, call an overweening exercise of power, into the vortex of mere politics. Well, you will readily understand why, as long as I had a hope that the zeal and kindness of my friends might keep me in my place, it was impossible for me to abandon them. Could they have returned me by a majority of one, painful as it is to a man of my time of life, and feeling the weight of public cares, to be incessantly struggling for his seat, nothing could have induced me to quit that University to which I had so long ago devoted my best care and attachment. But by no act of mine I am free to come among you. And having been thus set free, I need hardly tell you that it is with joy, with thankfulness, and enthusiasm, that I now, at this eleventh hour, a candidate without an address, make my appeal to the heart and the mind of South Lancashire, and ask you to pronounce upon that appeal. As I have said, I am aware of no cause for the votes which have given a majority against me in the University of Oxford, except the fact that the strongest conviction that the human mind can receive, that an overpowering sense of the public interests, that the practical teachings of experience, to which from my youth Oxford herself taught me to lay open my mind—all these had shown me the folly, and, I will say, the madness of refusing to join in the generous sympathies of my countrymen, by adopting what I must call an obstructive policy.'

The same evening the Chancellor of the Exchequer

addressed an immense audience in the Royal Amphitheatre of Liverpool, where he met with a similar ovation. In the opening words of his speech, which had a tone of pathos running through them, Mr. Gladstone again paid a tribute to his University, and then went on to deal with the impending election. 'If I am told that it is only by embracing the narrow interests of a political party that Oxford can discharge her duties to the country, then, gentlemen, I at once say I am not the man for Oxford. We see represented in that ancient institution—represented more nobly, perhaps, and more conspicuously than in any other place, at any rate with more remarkable concentration—the most prominent features that relate to the past of England. I come into South Lancashire, and I find here around me an assemblage of different phenomena. I find development of industry; I find growth of enterprise; I find progress of social philanthropy; I find prevalence of toleration; and I find an ardent desire for freedom. . . . . I have honestly, I have earnestly, although I may have feebly, striven to unite, in my insignificant person that which is represented by Oxford and that which is represented by Lancashire. My desire is that they should know and love one another. If I have clung to the representation of the University with desperate fondness, it was because I would not desert that post in which I seem to have been placed. I have not abandoned it. I have been dismissed from it, not by academical, but by political agencies. I don't complain of those political influences by which I have

been displaced. The free constitutional spirit of the country requires that the voice of the majority should prevail. I hope the voice of the majority will prevail in South Lancashire. I do not for a moment complain that it should have prevailed in Oxford. But, gentlemen, I come now to ask you a question whether, because I have been declared unfit longer to serve the University on account of my political position, there is anything in that position, there is anything in what I have said and done, in the arduous office which I hold, which is to unfit me for the representation of my native county?' Before concluding his speech, Mr. Gladstone briefly reviewed the course of Liberal legislation during the last Parliament.

The polling for South Lancashire took place on the 20th, with the following result:—Egerton, 9171; Turner, 8806; Gladstone, 8786; Legh, 8476; Thompson, 7703; Heywood, 7653. The Hon. A. Egerton and Mr. Turner (Conservatives), and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were accordingly declared elected. Of the defeated candidates, Mr. Legh was a Conservative, and Messrs. Thompson and Heywood were Liberals. Mr. Gladstone was at the head of the poll in Liverpool, Manchester, and all the large towns.

The general election resulted in considerable gains to the Liberal party, but during the autumn that party sustained a severe loss by the death of Lord Palmerston. The late Premier had not only been successful in uniting the various Liberal sections in the House of Commons, but had commanded the esteem and forbearance of his

Conservative opponents. The Government was now reconstructed, with Earl Russell as Prime Minister and Mr. Gladstone leader in the Lower House. The earnest temperament of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which led him to regard everything in the most severely conscientious light, with little desire for banter, for trimming, or for compromise, caused some speculation, and not a little anxiety, as to his management of the House of Commons. To the joviality—in some instances amounting almost to buffoonery—of Lord Palmerston, the new First Minister in the Commons could lay no claim. Politics, with him, ever formed a science of the gravest and deepest moment. The prognostications and complaints of those who declared that he had not the peculiar qualities demanded in a leader must, on the whole, be considered to have failed during the first year of his Parliamentary leadership; and in our generation there has been no more arduous or critical session witnessed than that of 1866.

Before discussing the great reform measures of the year—which were fraught with the most important consequences—the budget and several questions of moment, in whose discussion Mr. Gladstone took a prominent part, demand attention. Dealing first with the financial statement, it may be remarked (as, indeed, it has been our lot to observe on previous occasions) that the condition of the public revenue was still so flourishing as to afford hopes of a yet further reduction of taxation. On the 3rd of May, the Chancellor of the Exchequer—causing for the moment a suspension

of hostilities between the rival political parties on the Franchise question—laid his annual account before the committee. He expressed his own sense of relief in entering upon a question which would involve no party struggle. He had not to announce a surplus of revenue on the scale of the last three years, which had reached an average of three millions and a half; but he should still be able to make reductions not without interest. The estimated expenditure for the past year had been upwards of £66,000,000, but the actual expenditure was only £65,914,000. The revenue was £67,812,000, leaving a surplus of £1,898,000. The revenue had been £1,424,000 more than was calculated. The average increase in revenue since 1864 was about a million and a quarter per year. The loss caused by the reductions of last year had slightly exceeded the estimate. The Exchequer balances had been reduced by unusual liquidations of debt. On the 31st of March, 1865, they were £7,691,000; and on the same date in 1866, they had fallen to £5,851,000. The total estimated expenditure of the coming year was £66,225,000, which, as compared with the expenditure of last year, showed an increase of £78,000. The total estimate of the revenue for the year would be £67,575,000, thus leaving a surplus of £1,350,000, which, but for the charges of last year, would have been quite £2,700,000.

Mr. Gladstone next referred to the commercial treaties into which this country had entered in the most disinterested spirit, with a view of inducing other nations to follow our example. The effect of

the treaty with France on the export trade of that country had been such that the total increase on all kinds of goods had been from 58 millions and a half of francs to 141 millions. Treaties had been concluded with Belgium, Italy, the Zollverein, and finally with Austria, on the same standard as that with France—no duty to exceed 25 per cent. *ad valorem* on all British goods. This involved two changes in our own tariff, viz., the repeal of the duty on timber and the equalisation of the duty on wine in bottle and in wood. The consumption of timber had greatly increased in proportion to the reduction of the impost. The revenue for the year from this source was £307,000, and this would be reckoned as an entire loss for the year—the repeal to be immediate. The loss from the equalisation of the wine duty would be £71,000. It was further proposed to abolish the duty on pepper, which would involve the loss of £112,000 for the year. Turning to the duties on locomotion, he did not propose to interfere with the duty on carriages, horses, railways, &c.; but as to the duty on post-horses, which was £266,000, and on public conveyances, especially omnibuses, which was £142,000, he did propose to deal with them, the question being one of the comfort and convenience of the working classes, as well as of the middle class. The licenses would be left as at present, but the mileage duty would be reduced from a penny to a farthing a mile, at a loss for the future of £90,000 a year. The scale of the license duty on post-horses would be so reduced

as to place the small proprietor on a fair footing with the large, and this would involve a loss of £20,000 a year. These items disposed of £560,000 out of a surplus of £1,350,000. He should move resolutions renewing the tea duties and the income-tax at 4d. in the pound. With regard to the National Debt, a considerable amount of Exchequer bills had been paid off, and the sum paid in reduction of the debt last year was £5,179,000. The amount of the unfunded debt was now £8,267,000 as compared with over £18,000,000 in 1858.

He was convinced that the time had arrived when Parliament should face the subject of the National Debt. In the ensuing year there would be a large cessation of terminable annuities, not less than £600,000 a year, which in a degree made the present moment favourable for moving in that direction. Mr. Gladstone then adduced a variety of statistics upon the amount and the fluctuations in the National Debt, which, he said, was exercising an injurious social influence. America was applying her revenue, as far as possible, to the reduction of her debt; and this was an example to Europe, where borrowing was the growing vice of all European states. With regard to our own debt, we were living in a commercial era of extraordinary magnitude and increase; and our commercial undertakings were now as great, with out thirty millions of population, as those of France and America with their seventy millions of people put together. The cause of our pre-eminence was to be found in the possession and the facile use of

minerals, especially coal. It was a question whether this store of coal was practically inexhaustible; even if a substitute could be found, it could not be peculiar to England—therefore, if our coal should become exhausted, the relative pre-eminent commercial position of this country to other nations would be lost. It was calculated that at the end of one hundred years coal would have become exhausted at four thousand feet below the surface. The matter was one worthy of deep consideration. It was idle to think of stopping the supply of coal; to tax it, or to stop its export; and, therefore, it was obvious that as we could not supply coal at low prices beyond a given time, it was desirable to do something to meet an exigency which must arrive; and this might be done in a manner by relieving the country, as far as possible, of its great mortgage. A good plan of operating on the debt was by the conversion of perpetual into terminable annuities. There was then a sum of twenty-four millions standing on a deposit account of the trustees of savings-banks, the whole of which the State was now bound to pay; and it was proposed to take that sum which now cost £720,000 a year, and convert it into annuities terminating in 1885, which would raise the annual charge to one million. If this was done in 1866-7 there would be a charge something above £1,200,000. The following year there would be a further charge on this conversion of £502,000; but of this £293,000 would be relieved by the falling in of other annuities. The total additional charges, making all allowances, would be about £409,000

per annum. It was further proposed that so much of the dividends of the fund which it was intended to create, as were found to be to spare, should be re-invested; and the result would be that in 1885 the charge would be £1,440,000, while there would have been cancelled no less than fifty millions of stock—and from year to year the State would be buyers of stock. The surplus dealt with in making the reductions which he had stated would be £1,064,000, leaving an unappropriated balance of £286,000. In concluding his statement, the right hon. gentleman said the Government had thought it well to cast a glance into the future, and to endeavour in some degree to meet its demands, so that those who came after them might have reason to say that, while making provision for their own immediate wants, they had also taken some concern for those which were to succeed.

These proposals excited little opposition. The plan for the conversion of a portion of the National Debt into terminable annuities, with a view to its gradual liquidation, was made the subject of a separate bill, which passed its second reading. Here its progress was arrested. A change of Ministry caused it to be postponed; but later in the session Mr. Gladstone said that he should revive his scheme whenever a favourable opportunity offered.

To commemorate the signal services rendered by Lord Palmerston to his country, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved in the House of Commons an address to the Queen, praying her Majesty to order the erection

of a monument to the deceased statesman in Westminster Abbey. In the previous November, when Mr. Gladstone visited Glasgow and was presented with the freedom of the city, he made a touching allusion, in his reply, to the heavy losses which the country had recently sustained in the ranks of official life.

This is no place in which to attempt an estimate of the character of Lord Palmerston. He enjoyed an unusual degree of popularity both in the House of Commons and the country, though the full grounds for this popularity it would be somewhat difficult to define. To a buoyant disposition, however, he united the especially English virtues of manliness, straightforwardness, and courage. His very frankness in diplomacy —a quality supposed to be fatal to diplomacy—ensured him success at many critical moments; but he had few claims to the highest rank of statesmanship. The two leaders of the House of Commons admirably summed up his most prominent characteristics on the occasion above alluded to. 'All who knew Lord Palmerston,' observed Mr. Gladstone, 'knew his genial temper and the courage with which he entered into the debates in this House; his incomparable tact and ingenuity—his command of fence—his delight, his old English delight in a fair stand-up fight. Yet, notwithstanding the possession of these powers, I must say I think there was no man whose inclination and whose habit were more fixed, so far as our discussions were concerned, in avoiding whatever tended to exasperate, and in having recourse to those means by which animosity

might be calmed down. He had the power to stir up angry passions, but he chose, like the sea-god in the *Æneid*, rather to pacify—

"Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus."

That which, in my opinion, distinguished Lord Palmerston's speaking from the oratory of other men, that which was its most remarkable characteristic, was the degree in which he said precisely that which he meant to express.' Mr. Gladstone added that the late Premier had a nature incapable of enduring anger or the sentiment of wrath. This was a noble gift of the original nature, and it was delightful to remember it in connection with him. Mr. Disraeli supplemented these observations by the remark that that statesman was peculiarly to be envied who, when he left his contemporaries, left them not merely the memory of great achievements, but also the wider tradition of personal affection and social charm.

Irish questions occupied much of the attention of the House of Commons this session. The O'Donoghue moved an amendment to the Address, expressing deep regret at the wide-spread disaffection existing in Ireland, and representing to her Majesty that it was the result of grave causes which it was the duty of the Government to examine into and remove. Mr. Gladstone opposed the resolution, and said that the objects of the paragraph in the Address for which it was proposed to substitute it, were threefold—to pronounce a solemn denunciation of Fenianism, to recognise the

existence of the public opinion which had enabled the Government to deal firmly and boldly with the conspiracy, and to place on record the impartiality with which the law had been administered. The evils from which Ireland suffered could not be eradicated immediately; the existing dissatisfaction must first be uprooted by the vindication of the law, and that being done, inquiry into the existence of evils became an obligation which no Government could resist. The amendment was rejected by an overwhelming majority.

The condition of Ireland became so grave, that the Government were driven to propose a bill suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in that country. Mr. Bright called upon the 'two great and trusted leaders,' Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, to suspend for a moment their contests for office, and to combine in an effort to ascertain the causes of Irish discontent, and to apply a remedy. He believed there was a mode of making Ireland loyal, and he threw the responsibility of discovering it on the Government and on the Imperial Parliament. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in defending the Ministerial measure, expressed the regret and pain with which he had listened to Mr. Bright's speech, much of which was open to question, and was ill-timed. He declined to recognise the voice of Ireland, except as conveyed through the mouths of her legally elected representatives, and congratulated the House on the general unanimity with which the Irish members had acquiesced in the bill. The Government were ready at a fitting time to consider any measures

which might be proposed for the benefit of Ireland, but it was the single duty of the House that day to strengthen the hands of the Executive in the preservation of law and order. The bill subsequently passed through all its stages. After the Earl of Derby's Administration came into power, Lord Naas brought in a renewal bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in lieu of that which was about to expire. Mr. Gladstone said that while the Government were adding to their responsibilities in connection with Ireland by asking for this renewal, yet without considering whether their general policy was such as he could approve, he could not refuse to strengthen their hands in such a way as they deemed necessary. If the late Ministry had still been in office, it would have been their duty to make a similar application.

This second bill passed through both Houses, and the events of the following autumn—which were the result of an anticipated great Fenian rising under 'Head Centre' Stephens—fully justified the course adopted by the Government.

In the course of this session, during the debate on Mr. Hardcastle's bill for the abolition of Church rates, Mr. Gladstone admitted that the law of Church rates was *primâ facie* open to grave objection; he could not vote for total abolition, however, but he invited Mr. Hardcastle to consider whether, by an equitable compromise, Dissenters might be exempted from paying Church rates, and at the same time be disqualified from interfering with funds to which they had not con-

tributed. This suggested compromise met with considerable favour, and although the second reading of Mr. Hardcastle's bill was carried, before any further proceeding could be taken upon it, the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his measure for the abolition of compulsory Church rates. When the second reading of this bill came on, Mr. Gladstone was no longer in office; but he pressed forward his measure, which passed its second stage, the bills introduced by Mr. Hardcastle and Mr. Newdegate being withdrawn. The session terminated, nevertheless, as had many sessions before it, without a final decision being arrived at upon this question.

In a debate on Continental affairs, concerned chiefly with the threatened hostilities between the two great rival states of Germany, Mr. Gladstone expressed his approval of the policy of calling a Conference to settle disputes between the European Powers, and he regretted that it had failed in this case. Shortly afterwards Austria and Prussia were at war. In a later debate in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone said that the struggles of Austria and Prussia for predominance had been an immense injury to Europe and to Germany, and the elevation of one power to a position to wield enormous influence would be an unmixed advantage even to the loser. The old position of Austria in Germany and Italy had not been beneficial to her, and though he lamented the attempt to introduce a third party into the strife, by the cession of Venetia to France, the loss of Venetia would be a gain to Austria. 'Even

if she were excluded from Germany, she had still a glorious task before her in the cultivation of that vast and fertile territory, and the civilisation of those millions of subjects which would still be left to her.' The right hon. gentleman exhorted Lord Stanley not to forget that the cause of Italy was dear to the people of England, and warned him that they would never forgive a policy which attacked her unity and independence.

We now come to the great Reform debates of the year 1866. In redeeming the promise made in the Queen's Speech, on the 12th of March the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before a crowded and deeply interested audience, introduced the Government Reform Bill. In the outset he reviewed the recent history of the question, and announced that in consequence of the limited time at the disposal of Parliament, Government were compelled to restrict their labours to a Franchise Bill alone. With regard to the details of this measure, it was first proposed to create an occupation franchise in counties, including houses at £14 rental, and reaching up to £50, the present occupation franchise. It was calculated that this would add 171,000 persons to the electoral list. Next it was proposed to introduce into counties the provision which copyholders and leaseholders within Parliamentary boroughs now possessed for the purpose of county votes. The third proposition was a savings-bank franchise, which would operate in counties and towns, but which would have a more important operation in the former. All adult males who had deposited £50 in a savings-bank for two years would be entitled

to be registered for the place in which they resided. This privilege would add from 10,000 to 15,000 electors to the constituencies of England and Wales. In towns it was proposed to place compound householders on the same footing as ratepayers. It was intended to abolish the ratepaying clauses of the Reform Act, which would admit about 25,000 voters above the line of £10. It was also proposed to introduce a lodger franchise, both for those persons holding part of a house with separate and independent access, and for those who held part of a house as inmates of the family of another person. Then there was the £10 clear annual value of apartments, without reference to furniture. It was further proposed to abolish the necessity in the case of registered voters for residence at the time of voting. Lastly, following the precedent of the Government of Lord Derby, they would introduce a clause disabling from voting persons who were employed in the Government yards. The total number of new voters, of all classes, would be 400,000. With this appeal Mr. Gladstone closed an address which had been looked forward to with great expectation by the country:—

'If issue is taken adversely upon this bill, I hope it will be, above all, a plain and direct issue. I trust it will be taken upon the question, whether there is or is not to be an enfranchisement downwards, if it is to be taken at all. We have felt that to carry enfranchisement above the present line was essential; essential to character, essential to credit, essential to usefulness; essential to the character and credit not merely of the Government, not merely of the political party by which it has the honour to be represented, but of this House, and of the successive Parliaments and Governments, who all stand pledged with respect to this question of the representation. We cannot consent to look upon this large addition, considerable

although it may be, to the political power of the working classes of this country, as if it were an addition fraught with mischief and with danger. We cannot look, and we hope no man will look, upon it as some Trojan horse approaching the walls of the sacred city, and filled with armed men, bent upon ruin, plunder, and conflagration. We cannot join in comparing it with that *monstrum infelix*—we cannot say—

"——Scandit fatalis machina muros,
Fœta armis: mediæque minans illabitur urbi."

I believe that those persons whom we ask you to enfranchise ought rather to be welcomed, as you would welcome recruits to your army, or children to your family. We ask you to give within what you consider to be the just limits of prudence and circumspection; but, having once determined those limits, to give with an ungrudging hand. Consider what you can safely and justly afford to do in admitting new subjects and citizens within the pale of the Parliamentary constitution; and, having so considered it, do not, I beseech you, perform the act as if you were compounding with danger and misfortune. Do it as if you were conferring a boon that will be felt and reciprocated in grateful attachment. Give to these persons new interests in the Constitution, new interests which, by the beneficent processes of the law of nature and of Providence, shall beget in them new attachment; for the attachment of the people to the Throne, the institutions, and the laws under which they live is, after all, more than gold and silver, or more than fleets and armies, at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land.'

The bill satisfied the majority of the Liberal party, and met with considerable favour in the country; but by the Conservatives it was regarded as a dangerous step in the direction of democracy. In the House of Commons its most brilliant and effective opponent was Mr. Lowe. During these debates, while content to act the part of a prophet of evil, Mr. Lowe developed qualities which raised him into the first rank of Parliamentary debaters. On the evening following Mr. Gladstone's speech, he attacked the Chancellor of the Exchequer—and not unhappily—upon his own classic

ground, concluding as follows:—'The intentions and actions of the new Parliament are as yet hidden by the veil of the future. It may be that we are destined to avoid this enormous danger with which we are confronted, and not, to use the language of my right hon. friend, to compound with danger and misfortune. But, sir, it may be otherwise; and all I can say is, that if my right hon. friend does succeed in carrying this measure through Parliament, when the passions and interests of the day are gone by I do not envy him his retrospect. I covet not a single leaf of the laurels that may encircle his brow. I do not envy him his triumph. His be the glory of carrying it; mine of having to the utmost of my poor ability resisted it.'

Amongst other Liberals who deserted the Government on the Reform question were Mr. Laing and Mr. Horsman. The latter described Mr. Gladstone's address as 'another bid for power, another promise made to be broken, another political fraud and Parliamentary juggle.' This severe diatribe drew a crushing and memorable retort from Mr. Bright. Mr. Horsman, he said, had 'retired into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam, to which he invited every one who was in distress, and every one who was discontented. He has long been anxious to found a party in this House; and there is scarcely a member at this end of the House who is able to address us with effect or to take much part, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party and his cabal. At last he has succeeded in hooking the right hon. gentleman the member for Calne (Mr. Lowe).

I know it was the opinion many years ago of a member of the Cabinet that two men could make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable and so disinterested as the two right hon. gentlemen, we may hope to see for the first time in Parliament a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two is like the Scotch terrier that was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail.' This sally, which excited immoderate laughter, remains one of the happiest examples of Parliamentary retort and *badinage*. Mr. Bright concluded by giving his support to the Government measure, because so far as it went it was simple and honest, and because he believed if it became law it would give more solidity and duration to everything that was good in the Constitution, and to everything that was noble in the character of these realms.

Leave was given to bring in the bill, but hostile notices of amendment quickly poured in, the most important being one tabled by Earl Grosvenor, an 'Adullamite,' a name which, after Mr. Bright's speech, was generally given to those Liberal members who withheld their support from the Government. Earl Grosvenor's amendment was to the effect that it was inexpedient to consider the bill for the reduction of the franchise until the House had before it the whole scheme of the Government for the amendment of the representation of the people. This amendment, which was

hailed with delight by the Opposition, Mr. Gladstone said he should meet with a direct negative. Replying, the same evening, to Lord Robert Montagu, who had referred to Mr. Villiers as the 'pretended friend' of the working classes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer retorted the phrase upon the noble lord himself, and declared that if the working men whom he and others seemed to dread as an invading and destroying army, instead of their own flesh and blood, were introduced into the House, they would set him an example both of courtesy and good breeding.

The second reading of the Franchise Bill was fixed for an early day after the Easter recess. During this recess the Conservative party met at the residence of the Marquis of Salisbury, and decided upon strongly opposing the Government measure. In the country, however, the bill excited different feelings, and in many of the large towns enthusiastic demonstrations were held in its favour. In a letter addressed to his constituents, Mr. Bright said that the bill would pass if Birmingham and other towns did their duty. He referred to the Opposition as 'a dirty conspiracy,' and added, 'The men who, in every speech they utter, insult the working men, describing them as a multitude given up to ignorance and vice, will be the first to yield when the popular will is loudly and resolutely expressed.' The greatest interest was evoked by a demonstration at Liverpool, at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Duke of Argyll, Mr. Goschen, and other distinguished persons were present. Mr. Gladstone spoke with great power

and eloquence. Having expressed his regret that immediate danger to the measure which the Government had introduced should proceed from a name honoured in the ranks of the aristocracy, he made the following declaration, which was received by the vast audience rising in a body and cheering for several minutes:—'Having produced this measure, founded in a spirit of moderation, we hope to support it with decision. It is not in our power to secure the passing of the measure: that rests more with you, and more with those whom you represent, and of whom you are a sample, than it does with us. Still, we have a great responsibility, and are conscious of it; and we do not intend to flinch from it. We stake ourselves—we stake our existence as a Government—and we also stake our political character on the adoption of the bill in its main provisions. You have a right to expect from us that we should tell you what we mean, and that the trumpet which it is our business to blow should give forth no uncertain sound. Its sound has not been, and, I trust, will not be, uncertain. We have passed the Rubicon—we have broken the bridge, and burned the boats behind us. We have advisedly cut off the means of retreat, and having done this, we hope that, as far as time is yet permitted, we have done our duty to the Crown and to the nation.'

This was a note of preparation for the Liberal party in view of the coming struggle. The debate on the second reading of the bill commenced on the 12th of April. On no occasion since, and seldom before, has such a flow of eloquence been heard within the walls of

the House of Commons. The debate was continued for eight nights. It was opened by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, in moving the second reading of the Ministerial measure, adverted upon the necessity for legislating on the subject, and showed the propriety of proceeding by well-defined stages. He also warmly defended the working classes from the charges which had been brought against them of ignorance, drunkenness, venality, and violence. He combated the delusion of the Conservative party that the bill was adverse to their interests, regretting that they should have fallen into it, and created much amusement by reading a passage from the current *Quarterly Review*, purporting to give an account of the secret motives of the introduction of this bill, which, by an apt Shakespearian quotation, he characterised as 'a gross and palpable fiction.' Mr. Gladstone then replied in detail to the arguments urged against the bill, and said he calculated that the working classes would only have the command of 120 seats, against 538 elected by the other classes in the community. A further reduction of the franchise would not be dangerous. Having announced that the Government would not proceed with any other part of their reform scheme until the fate of the present bill had been determined, the right hon. gentleman replied to the charges of Mr. Lowe, and said there was no hope for England if the picture which he strove to draw with his matchless power were indeed true. 'I thank the House,' said the speaker, in conclusion, 'for the great patience and kindness with which it has heard me on

such a subject as this; and, after what has occurred, it can hardly be but that men should become warm. But let us endeavour to keep our balance; let us recollect to look before and after. In this spirit I do earnestly entreat and conjure the House, on whichever side, to remember that it is not enough for us now to say, as we shall soon be asked to say, "We are now ready to entertain the question of reform with a view to its settlement." Enough, and more than enough, there have been already of barren, idle, mocking words. Deeds are what are wanted. I beseech you to be wise, and, above all, to be wise in time.'

Earl Grosvenor then moved his amendment, which was seconded by Lord Stanley. On the second night of the debate Sir E. Bulwer Lytton delivered a powerful speech, and one that threw the Opposition into a frenzy of delight. He turned upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer his phrase that the working classes were our own flesh and blood, and expressed his amazement that he could descend to a species of argument so hollow in itself, and so perilous in its logical deductions. 'What has the right hon. gentleman,' demanded the hon. baronet, 'to say to the millions who will ask him one day, "Are we an invading army? Are we not fellow-Christians? Are we not your own flesh and blood?" Does he think it will be answer enough to give that kind of modified opinion which he put forth last night, and to say, "Well, that is very true. For my own part, in my individual capacity, I cannot see that there is any danger in admitting you; but still, you know, it is wise

to proceed gradually. A £7 voter is real flesh and blood. But you are only gradual flesh and blood. Read Darwin on the origin of species, and learn that you are fellow-Christians in an imperfect state of development."' He exhorted Liberal members, in Mr. Gladstone's words, to 'be wise in time,' and to vote for the rejection of the bill.

Mr. J. Stuart Mill welcomed the bill as a valuable gain, and professed himself entirely uninfluenced by any terror of the admission of the working classes. Sir Hugh Cairns contended that the admission of the great body of the working classes would disturb the balance of the Constitution. Mr. Horsman, taking up the Chancellor of the Exchequer's phrase that the Government had broken down their bridges and burnt their boats, said these were the acts of desperate men, and were not calculated to inspire confidence. Mr. Bright spoke at considerable length in favour of the measure. He demonstrated that it would only admit 116,000 real working men, and would give but one-fourth of the electoral power in the boroughs to the class which formed three-quarters of the people, leaving four millions of adult males entirely destitute of political power. The Opposition, in rejecting this moderate scheme, were either misled by their leaders, or else had driven their leaders into a pernicious course. Mr. Lowe made another brilliant attack upon the bill. He ridiculed the 'flesh and blood' argument, pointed out the danger arising from the power of the working classes to combine for the accomplishment of their objects, and

prophesied that, if the bill were adopted, there was no saying where they would stop in the downward direction of democracy. Democratise the House of Commons, and the institutions which now stood between it and the Throne would be swept away. In a final appeal to the House, Mr. Lowe said, 'Surely the heroic work of so many centuries, the matchless achievements of so many wise heads and strong hands, deserve a nobler consummation than to be sacrificed at the shrine of revolutionary passion or the maudlin enthusiasm of humanity! But, if we do fall, we shall fall deservedly. Uncoerced by any external force, not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth and the surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands we are about to pluck down on our heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. History may tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful.' Lord Cranborne said that he would not speculate in the dark; and Mr. Disraeli, in a speech of nearly three hours' duration, maintained that it was impossible to fathom the effects of this Franchise Bill till the complete scheme was before them. He defended his party from the charges brought against it of dealing unfairly with this and other questions, and concluded with an attack upon Mr. Gladstone, who, he said, was Americanising our institutions. The House ought to proceed, not upon the principle that it was the House of the people, but that it represented a great

political order in the State, and not an indiscriminate multitude.

The most striking of all the incidents of this celebrated debate arose in connection with the closing speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which he made some unpremeditated and pathetic allusions to his relations with the Liberal party. The attack of the leader of the Opposition in great measure led to this remarkable passage in his reply. Rising at one o'clock in the morning to conclude a legislative battle which had begun a fortnight before, Mr. Gladstone—in his best vein, and in a strain of eloquence which even his enemies allowed they had never known surpassed—proceeded to rebut the charges which had been made against the bill. 'At last,' he said, alluding to a statement by Mr. Disraeli, 'we have obtained a declaration from an authoritative source that a bill which, in a country with five millions of adult males, proposes to add to a limited constituency 200,000 of the middle-class and 200,000 of the working-class, is, in the judgment of the leader of the Tory party, a bill to reconstruct the Constitution upon American principles.' Denying Mr. Lowe's inference that in certain observations of his at a public meeting he had meant to disparage the members of that House, Mr. Gladstone said these words referred, 'not to the House of Commons, but to certain depraved and crooked little men.' He frankly owned that he was speaking first and foremost of Mr. Lowe, who was opposed to Reform in any shape. Mr. Gladstone then replied to the various animad-

versions of Mr. Disraeli to which we have already alluded :—

'The right hon. gentleman, secure in the recollection of his own consistency, has taunted me with the errors of my boyhood. When he addressed the hon. member for Westminster, he showed his magnanimity by declaring that he would not take the philosopher to task for what he wrote twenty-five years ago; but when he caught one who, thirty-six years ago, just emerged from boyhood, and still an undergraduate at Oxford, had expressed an opinion adverse to the Reform Bill of 1832, of which he had so long and bitterly repented, then the right hon. gentleman could not resist the temptation. He, a Parliamentary leader of twenty years' standing, is so ignorant of the House of Commons, that he positively thought he got a Parliamentary advantage by exhibiting me as an opponent of the Reform Bill of 1832. As the right hon. gentleman has exhibited me, let me exhibit myself. It is true, I deeply regret it, but I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning, every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth; with Canning I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning I rejoiced in the opening which he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Canning, and under the shadow of that great name, and under the shadow of that yet more venerable name of Burke, I grant, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed just the same as the mature mind of the right hon. gentleman is now impressed. I had conceived that fear and alarm of the first Reform Bill in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford which the right hon. gentleman now feels; and the only difference between us is this—I thank him for bringing it out—that, having those views, I moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright English, and that the right hon. gentleman is still obliged to skulk under the cover of the amendment of the noble lord. I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of the Oxford Union Debating Society in the year of grace 1831. My position, sir, in regard to the Liberal party is in all points the opposite of Earl Russell's. . . . . I have none of the claims he possesses. I came among you an outcast from those with whom I associated, driven from them, I admit, by no arbitrary act, but by the slow and resistless forces of conviction. I came among you, to make use of the legal phraseology, *in formâ pauperis*. I had nothing to offer you but faithful and honourable service. You received me, as Dido received the shipwrecked Æneas—

"Ejectum littore, egentem
Accepi,"

and I only trust you may not hereafter at any time have to complete the sentence in regard to me—

"Et regni, demens, in parte locavi."

You received me with kindness, indulgence, generosity, and I may even say with some measure of confidence. And the relation between us has assumed such a form that you can never be my debtors, but that I must for ever be in your debt. It is not from me, under such circumstances, that any word will proceed that can savour of the character which the right hon. gentleman imputes to the conduct of the Government with respect to the present bill.'

The Chancellor of the Exchequer thus concluded his impassioned speech :—

'Sir, we are assailed; this bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble friend Lord Russell. We stand with it now; we may fall with it a short time hence. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of to-night is not the last that must take place in the struggle. At some point of the contest you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may bury the bill that we have introduced, but we will write upon its gravestone for an epitaph this line, with certain confidence in its fulfilment—

"Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor."

You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of our debates does not for a moment impede or disturb—those great social forces are against you ; they are marshalled on our side; and the banner which we now carry in this fight, though perhaps at some moment it may droop over our sinking heads, yet it soon again will float in the eye of Heaven, and it will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not far distant victory.'

The division took place under circumstances of the greatest excitement. The Speaker having put the

question, members withdrew. After voting, the 'Ayes' and the 'Noes' gradually found their way to the seats on the floor and in the galleries. A spectator, describing the memorable scene, says that in about twenty minutes a strange electric-like agitation began to manifest itself. Mr. Walpole whispered to Mr. Disraeli the word 'Six.' Shortly afterwards Mr. Brand appeared, and it was known that the strength of the Opposition was larger than the Liberals had feared or the Tories had hoped. Mr. Childers rushed up the floor to the Treasury bench, and, in a tone of disappointment, uttered the word 'Five' to Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Adam, the Government teller, now emerged upon the scene. The House was charged with electricity like a vast thundercloud; and now the spark was about to be applied. Strangers rose in their seats, the crowd at the bar pushed half-way up the House, the Royal Princes leaned forward in their standing-places, and all was confusion. The tellers walked up the floor and made due obeisance to the chair. Then, loudly and distinctly, Mr. Brand read out the numbers as follows:—Ayes to the right, 318; Noes to the left, 313. The majority for the Government was accordingly five. What followed is best described in the language of the spectator just mentioned:—

'Hardly had the words left the teller's lips than there arose a wild, raging, mad-brained shout from floor and gallery such as has never been heard in the present House of Commons. Dozens of half-frantic Tories stood up in their seats, madly waved their hats, and hurrahed at the top of their voices. Strangers in both galleries clapped their hands. The Adul-

lamites on the Ministerial benches, carried away by the delirium of the moment, waved their hats in sympathy with the Opposition, and cheered as loudly as any. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his speech, had politely performed the operation of holding a candle to—Lucifer (Mr. Lowe); and he, the prince of the revolt, the leader, instigator, and prime mover of the conspiracy, stood up in the excitement of the moment—flushed, triumphant, and avenged. His hair, brighter than silver, shone and glistened in the brilliant light. His complexion had deepened into something like bishop's purple. His small, regular, and almost woman-like features, always instinct with intelligence, now mantled with the liveliest pleasure. He took off his hat, waved it in wide and triumphant circles over the heads of the very men who had just gone into the lobby against him. "Who would have thought there was so much in Bob Lowe?" said one member to another; "why, he was one of the cleverest men in Lord Palmerston's Government!" "All this comes of Lord Russell's sending for Goschen," was the reply. "Disraeli did not half so signally avenge himself against Peel," interposed another; "Lowe has very nearly broken up the Liberal party." These may seem to be exaggerated estimates of the situation; but in that moment of agitation and excitement I dare say a hundred sillier things were said and agreed to. Anyhow, there he stood, that usually cold, undemonstrative, intellectual, white-headed, red-faced, venerable-looking arch-conspirator! shouting himself hoarse, like the ringleader of schoolboys at a successful barring-out, and amply repaid at that moment for all Skye-terrier witticisms and any amount of popular obloquy! But see, the Chancellor of the Exchequer lifts up his hand to bespeak silence, as if he had something to say in regard to the result of the division. But the more the great orator lifts his hand beseechingly, the more the cheers are renewed and the hats waved. At length the noise comes to an end by the process of exhaustion, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer rises. Then there is a universal hush, and you might hear a pin drop. He simply says, 'Sir, I propose to fix the committee for Monday, and I will then state the order of business.' It was twilight, brightening into day, when we got out into the welcome fresh air of New Palace Yard. Early as was the hour, about three hundred persons were assembled to see the members come out, and to cheer the friends of the bill. It was a night to be long remembered. The House of Commons had listened to the grandest oration ever yet delivered by the greatest orator of his age; and had then to ask itself how it happened that the Liberal party had been disunited, and a Liberal majority of sixty "muddled away."'

Few could anticipate at this time that there would be a swift and irresistible appeal from 'Philip drunk to

Philip sober,' and that, in the course of one short year, a Conservative Government would find itself compelled to take up that very question of Reform, whose virtual defeat its opponents now hailed with such intoxicated expressions of delight. That the Liberal majority on this question had been 'muddled away,' was certainly not Mr. Gladstone's fault, for if matchless eloquence could have retained it, his address was well calculated to achieve this end. He was more than equal to a task that might well have discouraged any Parliamentary leader. 'Those who read his speech,' wrote one who listened to it, 'must be struck with its marvellous power, breadth, and comprehensiveness; its dignity, its spirit, its pathos, its tact, as displayed in his deference to the Opposition as a great party; his touching appeal to the Liberal party to forget the smallness of his claims to be their leader; his confidence that time was with him as the conductor of this great question, conveyed in an ordinary metaphor, made brilliant by the language in which it was expressed, and which formed the last sentence of his speech. But really to appreciate the effect you must, as Æschines said of Demosthenes, have heard him. The sustainment of voice and power were equalled only by the infinite variety of the manner, the fine spirit, and the moral earnestness which pervaded it. It may not be the highest praise, but it must be said that it was a speech which was not Gladstonian proper —that is, it was one that came from Mr. Gladstone purified from his little defects, and elevated by the force of the situation to the very perfection of oratory,

and, better still, of Parliamentary management. If ever a speech influenced, in the sense of overwhelming, an organised Opposition, this one did just that.' The division list revealed how, and why, the Liberal majority had dwindled away. With the Government there voted only two Conservatives, but against them there were arrayed thirty-one Liberals and 282 Conservatives. The cause of Reform had been deserted by its professed friends. This division was reported as the largest which ever took place in the House of Commons. Six hundred and thirty-one members actually voted, and two paired. This only left twenty-five members, out of the entire number of which the House was composed, to be accounted for. Eleven seats were vacant, and there were absent—mostly from serious illness—thirteen members, chiefly Liberals. These various classes, with the Speaker, constituted the full House.

When the House met on the 30th of April, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the Government saw nothing in the recent division to prevent them from going on with their bill. Both sides had agreed to the principle of a reduction of the franchise. A few days later, Mr. Gladstone introduced the Government measure for the redistribution of seats. It proposed, by grouping together a number of small boroughs, giving one or two representatives only to each group, to gain forty-one seats, and eight others were to be reduced to one representative each, making a total of forty-nine. Where the population of a group was less than 15,000, there would be one member; and

where it was above 15,000, there would be two members for the group. The seats thus gained it was proposed to distribute among populous counties to the number of twenty-six; to give an extra representative to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Salford; to divide the Tower Hamlets into two divisions, with two members each; to create seven new electoral boroughs with one member each, and one new borough, Kensington and Chelsea, with two; and to give, moreover, seven seats to Scotland. Leave was also given to bring in the Scotch and Irish Reform Bills.

Mr. Gladstone intimated that the Government would not advise a prorogation of Parliament until both questions, viz., that of the Franchise and that of Redistribution, had been disposed of. The second reading of the Redistribution Bill was carried on the 14th of May without a division, but Mr. Disraeli took the opportunity of severely criticising the course of the Government. The House and the country, he said, were in ignorance how to proceed, and ignorance could never settle anything. The House must come forward and help the Government, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer must recross the Rubicon, build up his bridges, and reconstruct his boats. Aftert he Whitsun holidays the debates were renewed with vigour. Sir R. Knightley moved, 'That it be an instruction to the Committee on the Franchise Bill to make provision for the prevention of corruption and bribery at elections.' The motion was carried by a majority of ten against the Government, whereupon Mr. Gladstone somewhat unnerved

Sir R. Knightley by saying they would wait for the production of his scheme. Those who had anticipated that the result of this division would wreck the Ministerial scheme were disappointed. A more formidable issue was raised by Captain Hayter's resolution, that in the opinion of the House the system of grouping proposed by the Government was neither convenient nor equitable, nor sufficiently matured to form the basis of a satisfactory measure. A long debate ensued, in the course of which Mr. John Stuart Mill said, with reference to an allegation that he had called the Conservatives the stupidest of parties, 'I never meant to say that the Conservatives are generally stupid. I meant to say that stupid persons are generally Conservative.' This amended phrase, conveying no more grateful compliment than its predecessor, was, of course, strongly resented by the Opposition.

Mr. Lowe made another vigorous and clever onslaught upon the bill. After criticising its provisions, and also the system of 'grouping' in the Redistribution Bill, he came to more personal matters. Mr. Bright standing upon the Constitution, he remarked, put him in mind of an American squib:—

> 'Here we stand upon the Constitution, by thunder,
> It's a fact of which there are bushels of proofs;
> For how could we trample upon it, I wonder,
> If it wasn't continually under our hoofs?'

After 1860, the honour of the Government on the question of Reform went to sleep for five years. 'Session after session it never so much as winked. As

long as Lord Palmerston lived honour slept soundly; but when Lord Palmerston died, and Lord Russell succeeded by seniority to his place, the "sleeping beauty" woke up.' It became necessary to have a Reform Bill. Mr. Lowe closed with another prediction of ruin to the Constitution. 'To precipitate a decision in the case of a single human life would be cruel. It is more than cruel, it is parricide in the case of the Constitution, which is the life and soul of this great nation. If it is to perish, as all human things must perish, give it at any rate time to gather its robe about it, and to fall with decency and deliberation—

> "To morrow! O that's sudden! spare it! spare it!
> It ought not so to die!"'

Earl Grosvenor made an appeal to Captain Hayter to withdraw his motion, on the ground that its success might lead to the breaking-up of the Government, which in the present state of European politics would be a great misfortune to the country, as it would involve the loss of Lord Clarendon's services. This drew from Mr. Disraeli a severe attack upon the policy of Lord Clarendon. Mr. Gladstone said that not a single objection had been made which went to the root of the bill, or which could not be dealt with in committee. The bill was only the application of the principles of 1832, and he warned the Opposition that any triumph which they might gain now would recoil with tenfold force on themselves. Much to the annoyance of the Opposition, but greatly to the satisfaction of the supporters of the

Government, Captain Hayter withdrew his resolution. A strange scene thereupon occurred. The bulk of the Opposition hurried out of the House to avoid a division, when the Speaker put the usual question. The amendment was then negatived without a dissentient voice.

But more serious peril still awaited the measure. After several abortive resolutions, an amendment was proposed by Lord Dunkellin, which proved fatal to the existence of the bill, and led to the resignation of the Government. His lordship proposed that the borough franchise should be based on rating instead of rental, as being a more convenient and constitutional principle. The Chancellor of the Exchequer strongly opposed the motion on the grounds, first, that it involved a limitation of the franchise, and, secondly, that there were grave practical difficulties in the way of the operation of the principle.

The discussion upon this amendment had an unlooked-for result. The Government were placed in a minority of 11, the numbers being—For the amendment, 315; against, 304. The Opposition were in a paroxysm of delight, and the scene almost equalled in excitement that which occurred after the division upon the second reading of the bill. The Adullamites and a large number of the Conservatives were irrepressible in their enthusiasm. The clerk having handed the paper to Lord Dunkellin, it was obvious which way the division had gone; but a storm of cheers from the Conservative benches prevented the numbers from being read out for

a minute or two. When the majority of eleven against the Government became known, there was witnessed an unparliamentary scene, viz., waving of hats, clapping of hands, and other demonstrations both by the Opposition and strangers who sympathised with them.

The Opposition had at length succeeded in their hostility to Reform and to the Ministry. On the following day, the 19th of June, Earl Russell in the Lords and Mr. Gladstone in the Commons announced that, in consequence of their late defeat, the Government had felt it to be their duty to make a communication to her Majesty. On the 26th fuller explanations were furnished in both Houses. In the Lords, Earl Russell stated that Ministers had tendered their resignations, to which they had adhered notwithstanding an appeal from the Queen to reconsider their determination. In the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone defended the Government for their resolve to stand or fall by the bill, and explained at length the circumstances which led to that declaration. Such a pledge, he admitted, was one which a Government should rarely give. 'It was the last weapon in the armoury of the Government: it should not be lightly taken down from the walls; and if it is taken down, it should not be lightly replaced, nor till it has served the purposes it was meant to fulfil. The pledge had been given, however, under the deepest conviction of public duty, and had the effect of making them use every effort in their power to avoid offence, to conciliate, support, and unite, instead of distracting.'

Earl Russell thus ceased to be First Lord of the Treasury, and the Earl of Derby reigned in his stead. The Conservative leader endeavoured unsuccessfully to obtain the active support of the Adullamites, and a purely Conservative Government consequently came into office, under difficulties which would have daunted almost any political chief save 'the Rupert of debate.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE REFORM AND IRISH CHURCH QUESTIONS.

The Reform Agitation—Statement by the Premier—Demonstration in Hyde Park—Meetings in the Provinces—Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal Party—The Ministerial Reform Scheme—Debate on the Second Reading—Mr. Gladstone's Nine Points—The Bill transformed—Protest by Lord Cranborne—His Attack on Mr. Disraeli—Speech of Mr. Lowe—Mr. Disraeli 'educates' his Party—Becomes Prime Minister—The Abyssinian Expedition—Scotch and Irish Reform Bills—Mr. Gladstone's Compulsory Church Rates Abolition Bill—Liberal and Conservative Finance—The Irish Church Question—Important Declaration by Mr. Gladstone—His Disestablishment Resolutions—Address of the Mover—Mr. Disraeli's Reply—His Retorts upon Lord Cranborne and Mr. Lowe—Mr. Gladstone's Motion carried by a large Majority—Conduct of the Government—Ministerial Explanations—The Suspension Bill passes the Commons—General Election—Mr. Gladstone is defeated in South-west Lancashire—Is elected for Greenwich—Great Liberal Triumph throughout the Country—Resignation of Mr. Disraeli—Mr. Gladstone becomes Premier.

THE fall of Lord Russell's Ministry, with the necessary postponement of the Reform question, led to a series of demonstrations in London and the provinces. At a meeting held in Trafalgar Square—which was attended by about 10,000 persons—the ex-Premier was censured for not having dissolved Parliament. A few days later, Lord Derby, in explaining the policy of the new Ministry in the House of Lords, said that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to see a very considerable portion of the class now excluded admitted to the franchise; but, on the other hand, he was afraid that the portion of the community who were most clamorous for the passing of a Reform Bill, were not that portion who

would be satisfied with any measure such as could be approved of by the two great political parties in the country. The Government reserved to themselves the most entire liberty upon this subject. Meanwhile the authorities prohibited the holding of public meetings in Hyde Park, though the Home Secretary, Mr. Walpole, stated in the House of Commons that there was nothing in the notice signed by Sir Richard Mayne to imply that processions, orderly conducted, were illegal. The council of the Reform League received great encouragement to persevere in their intentions from Mr. Bright, who wrote, 'If a public meeting in a public park is denied you, and if millions of intelligent and honest men are denied the franchise, on what foundation do our liberties rest, or is there in this country any liberty but the toleration of the ruling class?' On the 23rd of July a riot occurred in Hyde Park in consequence of the order of the Government being carried out against the proposed demonstration of the League. The Reformers marched in procession to the Marble Arch, but were repulsed by the police in their efforts to enter the park. The leaders then returned to Trafalgar Square, where resolutions were passed, thanking Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and others, for remaining faithful to the cause of Reform. At this time, however, a scene of great violence was proceeding in Hyde Park. The mob tore down the railings and entered the enclosure, with loud cheering and waving of hats and handkerchiefs. Attacks upon the police by the mob, and *vice versâ*, ensued; a number of persons were

seriously injured, and disastrous consequences were apprehended, when fortunately order was restored by the intervention of a body of Life Guards. On the 25th the Home Secretary received a deputation from the Reform League, when he gave an undertaking that if the Reformers would only use the park in a legal and peaceable way there should be no display of military or police. Mr. Walpole became deeply affected during this interview. The spectacle of a Home Secretary in tears so greatly disturbed the gravity of the press that many of the journals demanded a sterner guardian of the public order.

Parliament was prorogued on the 10th of August, but the Reform demonstrations continued through the whole of the recess. A meeting was held at Brook-fields, near Birmingham, the number attending being estimated at 250,000. At a second meeting in the Town Hall the same evening, Mr. Bright urged his hearers to press on in their agitation for restoring the British Constitution with all its freedom to the British people. The language held by some of the prominent friends of Reform was not always discreet, and Lord Derby and Mr. Lowe were especially subjected to violent attacks out of doors. Mr. Gladstone alone, at this juncture, amongst the popular leaders on the Reform question, appears to have preserved a calm and dignified attitude. While defending the proceedings of the late Government, in a speech delivered at Salisbury, he promised that a fair consideration should be given to any well-digested scheme

brought forward by their successors, provided it was introduced promptly, and showed a spirit of moderation and justice. Complaints were at this time made against Mr. Gladstone's leadership of the Liberal party; but Mr. Grant Duff interpreted the feeling of the bulk of his supporters when he remarked of the right hon. gentleman, 'He has a horrible foreboding, that—to use his own words—time is on the side of those very politicians who, when he started in public life, were at the opposite pole of the political sphere, against whom all the strength of his youth and of his manhood was directed. Read his early speeches, study his early books; he has travelled far since then, and may well murmur from time to time at that destiny which may lead him, before he dies, like the Sicambrian* of old, to burn what he adored, and to adore that which he burnt.'

The Reform demonstrations proceeded, as we have already observed, with little intermission, until the opening of Parliament, on the 5th of February in the following year (1867). The strong feeling pervading all classes in favour of a settlement of the Franchise question had its due weight with the Government, and, notwithstanding Lord Derby's previous declaration, the Queen's Speech once more promised that attention should be called to the representation of the people in Parlia-

* An allusion to Clovis, the founder of the French Monarchy, who was converted to Christianity. Being baptised by St. Remi, the latter exclaimed, as he poured upon the neck of Clovis the sacred oil, 'Humble thyself, fierce Sicamber; adore what thou didst burn, and burn that which thou hast adored.'

ment. In the debate on the Address, Mr. Gladstone said that the interests of the country demanded a speedy settlement of the question; and it was the duty of Parliament to accept, wherever they could get it, a measure which would be adequate to the just expectations of the country. On the 11th Mr. Disraeli announced the intentions of the Government. He stated that it was proposed to proceed by way of resolutions, which he now tabled; but objections were raised to this novel mode of dealing with the subject, and complaints were made that no precise details were furnished in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's resolutions. On the 25th, accordingly, Mr. Disraeli disclosed his scheme with greater fulness. He proposed, he said, to reduce the occupation franchise in boroughs to a £6 rating; in counties to £20; the franchise was also to be extended to any person having £50 in the funds, or £30 in a savings-bank for a year. Payment of £20 of direct taxes would also be a title to the franchise, as would a university degree. Votes would further be given to clergymen, ministers of religion generally, members of the learned professions, and certificated schoolmasters. It was proposed to disfranchise Yarmouth, Lancaster, Reigate, and Totnes, and to take one member each from twenty-three boroughs with less than 7,000 inhabitants. The House would have thirty seats to dispose of, and it was proposed to allot fourteen of them to new boroughs in the northern and midland districts, fifteen to counties, and one to the London University. The second division of the Tower Hamlets would return two

members, and several new county divisions named would have two additional members each. The scheme would add 212,000 voters to the borough, and 206,500 to the county constituencies.

Mr. Lowe demanded a simple bill which would bring the question fairly to an issue. He was ashamed to hear addressed to him, as a 658th part of the House, such language as this:—'If the House will deign to take us into its counsel, if it will co-operate with us in this matter, we shall receive with cordiality, with deference—nay, even with gratitude—any suggestion it likes to offer. Say what you like to us, only for God's sake leave us our places!' Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone enforced the difficulty of proceeding by vague resolutions. On the following day a meeting of the Opposition was held, attended by 289 members, when it was agreed to support an amendment with the object of setting aside the resolutions, and urging the Government to proceed at once by bill. Seeing the manifest feeling of the House, Mr. Disraeli, the same evening, announced that the Government would abandon the method of proceeding by resolutions, and would introduce a bill on the earliest possible day. Three Ministers—General Peel, the Earl of Carnarvon, and Lord Cranborne—resigned office in consequence of the decision of the Government to bring in what they deemed to be an advanced Reform Bill. On the 18th the scheme was introduced. Mr. Disraeli said that its principles were that in boroughs the electors should be all who paid rates, or twenty shillings in direct

taxes; the franchise would also be extended to certain classes qualified by education, or by the possession of a stated amount in the Funds, or in savings-banks—rated householders to have a second vote. The re-distribution of seats would be on the lines already specified. To guard against the power of mere numbers it was proposed to establish a system of checks, based on residence, rating, and dual voting. Mr. Gladstone strongly condemned these securities as illusions or frauds, which would be abandoned whenever it suited the Ministry; and he also predicted that a lodger franchise would have to be added to the bill. Lord Cranborne maintained that if the Conservative party accepted the bill they would be committing political suicide.

In the debate on the second reading, Mr. Gladstone cited nine defects in the bill which called for amendment, and Mr. Bright described the measure as bearing upon its face marks of deception and disappointment. The leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons speedily allowed it to be seen that he was—to use a word current at the time—'squeezable' upon the measure. The second reading was carried without a division. We do not propose to follow the course of the long and acrimonious debates which ensued in committee, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer met with severe taunts from many of his own followers. During the debate on clause 3, Mr. Beresford Hope made an allusion to the Tadpoles and Tapers of certain amusing story-books, and declared that, 'sink or swim, dissolution or no dissolution, whether he was in the next

Parliament or out of it, he for one, with his whole heart and conscience, would vote against the Asian mystery.' Mr. Disraeli retorted that when the hon. member talked about an Asian mystery, there were Batavian graces in all he said, which he noticed with satisfaction, and which charmed him.

A division arose amongst the Liberal members at this time, which resulted in the temporary withdrawal of Mr. Gladstone from the leadership of the party. It shortly afterwards appeared, however, that Mr. Gladstone did not intend to abandon the post of leader altogether, but that, in consequence of the decision of the House in favour of a direct and personal payment of rates by the householder, as essential to the franchise, he would personally desist from attempting to alter the basis of the bill, though he would still vote with his party on any amendments which they might bring forward for securing a still further extension of the franchise.

Mr. Bright, speaking of Mr. Gladstone at a Reform demonstration in Birmingham, said that since 1832 there had been no man of his rank as a statesman who had imported into the Reform question so much of conviction, of earnestness, and of zeal. 'Who is there in the House of Commons,' he demanded, 'who equals him in knowledge of all political questions? Who equals him in earnestness? Who equals him in eloquence? Who equals him in courage and fidelity to his convictions? If these gentlemen who say they will not follow him have any one who is equal, let them show him. If they can point out any statesman who

can add dignity and grandeur to the stature of Mr. Gladstone, let them produce him.' Shortly afterwards deputations from various parts of the country, accompanied by Members of Parliament, waited upon Mr. Gladstone to present addresses expressive of confidence in him as the Liberal leader.

The changes effected in the Reform Bill on its passage through committee were so great, as to lead almost to an entire transformation of the measure. The Government were defeated on an amendment restricting the residence in boroughs to twelve months; while a lodger franchise was secured on the motion of Mr. Torrens. A great difficulty arose with respect to the compound householder, whose case gave rise to protracted discussions; but ultimately, on the proposition of Mr. Hodgkinson, it was decided to abolish composition altogether in Parliamentary boroughs. The occupation franchise in counties was lowered from £15, the sum proposed by the bill, to £12. The 'fancy' franchises—the education and tax-paying clauses—were struck out. The boroughs of Lancaster, Reigate, and Great Yarmouth were disfranchised for gross bribery; and considerable modifications were secured in the clauses relating to the redistribution of seats. The clause providing for the use of voting papers at elections was struck out; and a third member was added to the representation of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds. Mr. Lowe was defeated on his proposal for cumulative voting, and Mr. Stuart Mill in his effort to enfranchise women.

The bill was read a third time on the 15th of July, after a final protest by its enemies. Lord Cranborne expressed his astonishment at hearing the bill described as a Conservative triumph. It was right that its real parentage should be established. The bill had been modified at the dictation of Mr. Gladstone, who demanded, first, the lodger franchise, which had been given; secondly, the abolition of distinctions between compounders and non-compounders, which had been conceded, as had, thirdly, a provision to prevent traffic in votes; fourthly, the omission of the taxing franchise; fifthly, the omission of the dual vote; sixthly, the enlargement of the distribution of seats, which had been enlarged by fifty per cent.; seventhly, the reduction of the county franchise; eighthly, the omission of voting-papers; ninthly and tenthly, the omission of the educational and savings-banks franchises. If the adoption of the principles of Mr. Bright could be described as a triumph, then indeed the Conservative party, in the whole history of its previous annals, had won no triumph so signal as this. 'I desire to protest, in the most earnest language I am capable of using, against the political morality on which the manœuvres of this year have been based. If you borrow your political ethics from the ethics of the political adventurer, you may depend upon it the whole of your representative institutions will crumble beneath your feet.'

Parliamentary history probably furnishes no case precisely parallel to this, where a prominent member

of a great political party who held such denunciatory language towards his chief, should, in the course of events, accept office under that chief, and become his ablest and most trusted lieutenant. Lord Cranborne concluded the remarkable speech from which we have just quoted by deeply regretting that the House of Commons had applauded a policy of legerdemain; and above all he regretted that 'this great gift to the people—if gift you think it—should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our Parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all that mutual confidence which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained.' Mr. Lowe observed that Mr. Bright had been agitating for household suffrage; now that he had got it, would it be easy to stop in the path of concession? It would now be necessary, continued Mr. Lowe, to teach their masters their letters, and he concluded with this philippic:—'Sir, I was looking to-day at the head of the lion which was sculptured in Greece during her last agony after the battle of Chæronea, to commemorate that event, and I admired the spirit and the power which portrayed in the face of that noble beast the rage, the disappointment, and the scorn of a perishing nation and a down-trodden civilisation, and I said to myself, "Oh for an orator, oh for an historian, oh for a poet, who would do the same thing for us!" We also have had our battle of Chæronea; we have had our dishonest victory. That

England that was wont to conquer other nations, had gained a shameful victory over herself; and oh that a man would rise, in order that he might set forth in words that could not die, the shame, the rage, the scorn, the indignation, and the despair, with which this measure is viewed by every Englishman who is not a slave to the trammels of party, or who is not dazzled by the glare of a temporary and ignoble success!'

The Reform Bill went up to the Lords, and, with certain amendments, was read a third time in the Upper House on the 6th of August. The Earl of Derby described the measure as 'a leap in the dark.' Two months later, at a Conservative banquet held in Edinburgh, Mr. Disraeli used the famous phrase respecting the education of his party. 'I had to prepare the mind of the country,' he remarked, 'and to educate—if it be not arrogant to use such a phrase—to educate our party.' This observation gave rise to so much comment, that Mr. Disraeli wrote to the journals, explaining the sense in which his language was to be taken, and denying that he had said he had been educating his party with the view of bringing about a much greater reduction of the franchise than his opponents had proposed. In February, 1868, by the retirement of the Earl of Derby, Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister.*

In the previous November Parliament had been

* There was, of course, but one possible Conservative Premier, Mr. Disraeli—he who had served the Conservative party for more than twenty years, who had led it to victory, and who had long been the ruling spirit of

summoned to meet chiefly in connection with the Abyssinian Expedition. The war was undertaken for the deliverance of Mr. Cameron, her Majesty's Consul at Massowah, Mr. Rassam, and others, who were held captive by King Theodore. The Queen's Speech, in addition to this matter, also dealt with the Fenian conspiracy, which had assumed the form of organised violence and assassination. In the debate on the Address Mr. Gladstone began his speech by express-

the Cabinet. To have reconstructed the Ministry without 'Vivian Grey' as its chief, would have been to enact in politics a well-known play under proverbial disadvantages. The Press generally congratulated Mr. Disraeli upon his elevation, though the comments passed upon the Prime Minister were in many instances mingled with raillery and sarcasm. From a clever article which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, placing in juxtaposition the rival claims of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli—we take the following extracts:—'One of the most grievous and constant puzzles of King David was the prosperity of the wicked and the scornful; and the same tremendous moral enigma has come down to our own days. In this respect the earth is in its older times what it was in its youth. Even so recently as last week the riddle once more presented itself in its most impressive shape. Like the Psalmist, the Liberal leader may well protest that verily he has cleansed his heart in vain and washed his hands in innocency; all day long he has been plagued by Whig lords, and chastened every morning by Radical manufacturers; as blamelessly as any curate he has written about *Ecce Homo*, and he has never made a speech, even in the smallest country town, without calling out with David, How foolish am I, and how ignorant! For all this, what does he see? The scorner who shot out the lip and shook the head at him across the table of the House of Commons last session has now more than heart could wish; his eyes, speaking in an Oriental manner, stand out with fatness, he speaketh loftily, and pride compasseth him about as with a chain. . . . That the writer of frivolous stories about *Vivian Grey* and *Coningsby* should grasp the sceptre before the writer of beautiful and serious things about *Ecce Homo*—the man who is epigrammatic, flashy, arrogant, before the man who never perpetrated an epigram in his life, is always fervid, and would as soon die as admit that he had a shade more brain than his footman

ing sympathy with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the painful circumstances under which he was then placed—Mrs. Disraeli, who was suffering from illness, being in a precarious state. He should now refrain from asking an explanation of statements made by Mr. Disraeli during the recess. With regard to the Abyssinian campaign, the Executive alone were responsible for the expedition hitherto, Parliament being entirely uncommitted upon the subject. There was a clear *casus belli* between our Government and the King of Abyssinia; but Mr. Gladstone warned the Ministry that the House would require to be convinced that the objects of the Expedition were attainable, that a war could be carried on with an enemy who might choose to run rather than to fight; also, how it was proposed to carry on the Expedition to an issue; and what were to be its limits. The House would, moreover, insist upon a distinct disclaimer, not only of territorial aggrandisement, but of all desire to contract new political responsibilities. As to the expenses of the war, he urged the Government to confide in the courage of Parliament, and not to make them in addition to the debt of the country. The right hon. gentleman concurred in the hopes expressed in the Speech of the speedy termination of the Italian difficulty, and of the suppression of the Fenian outrages;

—the Radical corrupted into a Tory before the Tory purified and elevated into a Radical—is not this enough to make an honest man rend his mantle, and shave his head, and sit down among the ashes inconsolable? Let us play the too-underrated part of Bildad the Shuhite for a space, while our chiefs thus have unwelcome leisure to scrape themselves with potsherds, and to meditate upon the evil way of the world.'

but he pressed for a settlement of the Reform question and of the Irish Land question, and trusted that the rumour was incorrect which assigned to the Irish Church Commission the function of drawing up plans for its reorganisation. Mr. Disraeli, speaking under the influence of emotion, said he was much touched by the manner in which Mr. Gladstone had referred to his domestic affliction, and by the way in which the House had received that allusion. He admitted that the House was quite unpledged to the Abyssinian expedition; and, with regard to Irish questions, said that the Government hoped to be able to introduce a bill dealing with the subject of the land. They were also giving their earnest attention to the Church question. Some days later a vote of £2,000,000 was agreed to for the Abyssinian expedition, but not until after much discussion; and on the 28th of November the House of Commons voted an additional penny in the income-tax to defray the further expenses of the expedition. The payment, out of Indian revenues, of the Indian troops engaged in the war was also sanctioned. The main purposes for which Parliament was called together having been thus attained, the two Houses adjourned on the 7th of December until the 13th of February following.

The work of Reform was completed in the session of 1868 by the passing of the Scotch and Irish Reform Bills, a Boundary Bill for England and Wales, an Election Petitions and Corrupt Practices Prevention Bill, and the Registration of Voters Bill. The object

of the last-named measure was to accelerate the elections, and to enable Parliament to meet before the end of 1868. The Scotch Reform Bill was introduced to assimilate the franchise of Scotland with that of England. It also proposed to increase the number of the House by giving seven additional representatives to Scotland. Two of these members were to be given to the universities, three to counties, and one to Glasgow. The debates record several important Ministerial defeats. Mr. Baxter carried against Government a proposition to disfranchise seven English boroughs with a population of less than 5,000 each. Mr. M'Laren and Mr. Bouverie likewise carried amendments against them, which led to considerable modifications in the bill. The Irish Reform Bill proposed to fix the borough franchise at £4, occupiers below that rental not paying rates in Ireland. There was also a limited scheme for redistribution of seats, but this was afterwards abandoned by the Government.

Early in the session the adoption by the House of Mr. Gladstone's Compulsory Church Rates Abolition Bill led to the settlement of a long-agitated question. By this measure all legal proceedings for the recovery of Church rates were to be henceforth abolished, except in cases of rates already made, or where money had been borrowed on the security of the rates; but it permitted voluntary assessments to be made, and all agreements to make such payments, on the faith of which any expenditure had been incurred, would be enforcible in the same manner as contracts of a like character in

any court of law or equity. The bill was opposed by a section of the Conservative party, but Lord Cranborne demanded what that party would gain if it adhered to the principle of 'no surrender.' Though it was with the deepest feeling of reluctance that he gave up anything which the Church possessed, he thought it wiser to accept the terms that were then offered, as he was distinctly of opinion that they might go further and fare worse. The bill, with certain amendments, eventually passed through both Houses, and became law.

But the question which overshadowed all others this session was that involving the fate of the Irish Church Establishment. Before discussing this subject, however, with its momentous legislative and other results, some reference must be made to a matter of considerable importance, arising out of and connected with the financial schemes of the Government. These schemes having been subjected to severe hostile criticism, the Chancellor of the Exchequer elaborately defended them. The nature of the charges will be gathered from Mr. Gladstone's reply to the Ministerial apology. 'We left the income-tax,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'at 4d. in the pound. The expenditure of 1859-60 was arranged by the Tory Government. It was early in July that, on coming into office, I had to meet a deficit of, I think, four and a half millions, in a year of which all the arrangements had been made, and of which between three and four months had actually gone.' After dealing at length with the army, navy, and civil service

charges, the right hon. gentleman went on to observe that, according to his calculation, the Liberal party had saved about £1,800,000 between 1862 and 1865, while the Tory Government exceeded the estimates in two years by £1,145,000, besides the cost of the Abyssinian war. Financial legislation in the years 1862-65 gave the country reduction of taxation to the extent of £2,276,000 annually. 'From thence it follows that the policy of the Liberal party has been to reduce the public charges, and to keep the expenditure within the estimates, and, as a result, to diminish the taxation of the country and the national debt; that the policy of the Tory Government, since they took office in 1866, has been to increase the public charges, and to allow the departments to spend more than their estimates, and as a result, to create deficits, and to render the reduction of taxation impossible. Which policy will the country prefer?' The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Ward Hunt, in replying to these financial charges, was unable directly to impugn their accuracy, but pleaded that the extra expenditure was accounted for by increased pay to the army, by the furnishing of breechloaders, and by the arming of fortifications.

On the 16th of March, towards the close of the debate on Mr. Maguire's motion, that the House resolve itself into a committee to take the condition of Ireland into immediate consideration, Mr. Gladstone struck the first blow in the struggle that was to end in the disestablishment of the Irish Church. He complained that the Ministerial programme failed to realise the grave

fact that we had reached a crisis in the Irish question. Ireland had an account with this country which had endured for centuries, and we had not done enough to place ourselves in the right. He dealt fully with the Government policy as affecting six questions deemed paramount, viz., Parliamentary reform, the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, railways, education, the land, and the Church. Coming to religious equality, he affirmed that it must be established, difficult as the operation might be; but he condemned the principle of levelling up. As to the appeals which had been made urging the Irish people to loyalty and to union, Mr. Gladstone said that was his object too; but with regard to the means the differences were still profound, and it was idle, it was mocking, to use words unless they could sustain them by corresponding substances. They must give the unreserved devotion of their efforts; and after warning Mr. Disraeli that, unless he had something more satisfactory to say on the subject of justice to Ireland than his colleagues, this question would immediately press for settlement, he concluded as follows:—'If we are prudent men, I hope we shall endeavour as far as in us lies to make some provision for a contingent, a doubtful, and probably a dangerous future. If we be chivalrous men, I trust we shall endeavour to wipe away all those stains which the civilised world has for ages seen, or seemed to see, on the shield of England in her treatment of Ireland. If we be compassionate men, I hope we shall now, once for all, listen to the tale of woe which comes from her, and the reality of which, if not

its justice, is testified by the continuous migration of her people,—that we shall endeavour to

> "Raze out the written troubles from her brain,
> Pluck from her memory the rooted sorrow."

But, above all, if we be just men, we shall go forward in the name of truth and right, bearing this in mind—that, when the case is proved, and the hour is come, justice delayed is justice denied.'

This speech excited feelings of consternation amongst the Ministerialists. Mr. Disraeli bewailed his own unhappy fate at the commencement of his career of Prime Minister, at finding himself face to face with the imperious necessity of settling out of hand an account seven centuries old. He complained that all the elements of the Irish crisis had existed while Mr. Gladstone was in office, but no attempt had been made to deal with them. The spirit of the age was not, he asserted, opposed to endowments, as had been laid down by Mr. Bright—who, with the aid of the philosophers, had now converted Mr. Gladstone to the same opinion. For himself, he was personally in favour of ecclesiastical endowments, and strongly objected to the destruction of the Irish Church. Mr. Maguire, being urged thereto by Mr. Gladstone, withdrew his motion.

But, with the express declarations of the leader of the Opposition, the Irish Church question had moved forward an enormous stage. To go back now was impossible, and to stand still was equally impossible. Mr. Gladstone's address became the basis of action for the Liberal party, and the country speedily took up the cry

of disestablishment. The right hon. gentleman himself, not shrinking from following up the policy he had indicated, with all convenient speed, laid upon the table of the House of Commons the following resolutions upon the Irish Church, which he intended to move in committee of the whole House:—'1. That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property. 2. That, subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity, or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of Parliament. 3. That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, humbly to pray that, with a view to the purposes aforesaid, her Majesty will be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities, in archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custody thereof.' A few days later Lord Stanley gave notice that he should propose the following amendment on the motion for going into committee on the Irish Church Establishment:—'That this House, while admitting that considerable modifications in the temporalities of the United Church in Ireland, may, after pending inquiry, appear to be expedient, is of opinion that any proposition tending to

the disestablishment or disendowment of that Church might be reserved for the decision of a new Parliament.' This amendment—which was warmly approved by the Ministerialists—Lord Stanley explained, would be taken at the first stage of the discussion, on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair.

The Government thus joined battle with Mr. Gladstone, and on the 30th of March the conflict began. The titles of the Acts relating to the Church Establishment, the 5th article of the Act of Union, and the coronation oath of the Sovereign, having been read from the table, Mr. Gladstone commenced his address in a House crowded with eager listeners to his indictment. The extracts from the existing laws, he remarked, would serve to remind the House that they were about to enter upon a solemn duty. Having indicated his method of procedure, he proposed—if the House should declare its opinion that the Irish Establishment should cease to exist—that the cessation should be effected in a manner worthy of the nation, affording ample consideration and satisfaction to every proprietary and vested right. The residue, after satisfying every just claim, should be treated as an Irish fund, applicable to the exclusive benefit of Ireland. Both the Liberal party and the Conservative party were justified hitherto in not taking up the subject, for previous to this time, no state of public feeling or opinion would have enabled this great question to be opened on the wide basis which it required. He had heard a great deal not only of apostasy, but of sudden apostasy; yet a change which

extended over a quarter of a century could hardly be called a sudden change.

Mr. Gladstone then briefly recapitulated his personal history on this question, which we have practically dealt with in a previous chapter. As to the actualities of the matter, he apprehended there would be no desire to deprive the Protestant community of the fabrics, provided they wished to apply them to religious purposes; and the same principle would be applied to the residences of the clergy. The proprietors of advowsons would also have a strict claim to compensation. Of the money value of the endowments, not less than three-fifths, possibly two-thirds, would remain in the hands of the Anglican communion in Ireland. He denied that the disendowment of the Irish Church would be dangerous to the English Establishment. What was dangerous to the latter was to hold her in communion with a state of things politically dangerous and socially unjust. The existence of the Irish Church was not necessary for the maintenance of Protestantism in Ireland. Though the census of 1861 showed a small proportionate increase of Protestants, the rate of conversion was so small that it would take 1,500 or 2,000 years to effect an entire conversion, if it went on at the same rate. The final arrangements in this matter might be left to a reformed Parliament, but he proposed that they should prevent by legislation this session the growing of a new crop of vested interests. There had been a connection between this country and Ireland for 700 years, but it had been marked by a

succession of storms and temporary calms. He called upon the House to settle its account with the sister island by removing the whole cause of dispute. Mr. Gladstone thus eloquently concluded his address :—

'There are many who think that to lay hands upon the national Church Establishment of a country is a profane and unhallowed act. I respect that feeling. I sympathise with it. I sympathise with it while I think it my duty to overcome and repress it. But if it be an error, it is an error entitled to respect. There is something in the idea of a national establishment of religion, of a solemn appropriation of a part of the Commonwealth for conferring upon all who are ready to receive it what we know to be an inestimable benefit; of saving that portion of the inheritance from private selfishness, in order to extract from it, if we can, pure and unmixed advantages of the highest order for the population at large. There is something in this so attractive that it is an image that must always command the homage of the many. It is somewhat like the kingly ghost in *Hamlet*, of which one of the characters of Shakspeare says :—

"We do it wrong, being so majestical,
To offer it the show of violence ;
For it is, as the air, invulnerable,
And our vain blows malicious mockery."

But, sir, this is to view a religious establishment upon one side, only upon what I may call the ethereal side. It has likewise a side of earth; and here I cannot do better than quote some lines written by the present Archbishop of Dublin, at a time when his genius was devoted to the muses. He said, in speaking of mankind :—

"We who did our lineage high
Draw from beyond the starry sky,
Are yet upon the other side,
To earth and to its dust allied."

And so the Church Establishment, regarded in its theory and in its aim, is beautiful and attractive. Yet what is it but an appropriation of public property, an appropriation of the fruits of labour and of skill to certain purposes, and unless these purposes are fulfilled, that appropriation cannot be justified. Therefore, sir, I cannot but feel that we must set aside fears which thrust themselves upon the imagination, and act upon the sober dictates of our judgment. I think it has been shown that the cause for action is strong—not for precipitate action, not for action beyond our powers, but for such action as the opportunities of the times and the condition of

Parliament, if there be but a ready will, will amply and easily admit of. If I am asked as to my expectations of the issue of this struggle, I begin by frankly avowing that I, for one, would not have entered into it unless I believed that the final hour was about to sound—

"Venit summa dies et ineluctabile fatum."

And I hope that the noble lord will forgive me if I say that before Friday last I thought that the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short, but that since Friday last, when at half-past four o'clock in the afternoon the noble lord stood at that table, I have regarded it as being shorter still. The issue is not in our hands. What we had and have to do is to consider well and deeply before we take the first step in an engagement such as this; but having entered into the controversy, there and then to acquit ourselves like men, and to use every effort to remove what still remains of the scandals and calamities in the relations which exist between England and Ireland, and to make our best efforts at least to fill up with the cement of human concord the noble fabric of the British Empire.'

Lord Stanley, in moving his amendment, admitted that not one educated man in a hundred would maintain that the Irish Church was all that it should be, or that there were no scandals in it; but Mr. Gladstone's resolutions merely came to this—that something must be done, without saying what it was. If the resolutions were carried, there would be no effective legislation this year. He strongly condemned a sudden change of view like the present, and declared that action now was impossible. Lord Cranborne condemned the amendment as ambiguous; it indicated either no policy at all, or a policy which the Ministry were afraid to avow. He did not pretend to predict the the probable course of the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. He should as soon undertake to tell the House which way the weather-cock

would point to-morrow. Such a system of management was unworthy of the House of Commons, and degrading to the functions of the Executive. While ready to meet the resolutions with a plain straightforward negative, he refused to support an amendment, the object of which was merely to gain time and to enable the Government to keep the cards in their hands for another year to shuffle as they pleased. Mr. Gathorne Hardy delivered a thoroughly Conservative and 'no-surrender' speech, and Mr. Bright justified disestablishment on the ground that the Irish Church had been, both as a missionary church and a political institution, a deplorable failure. The present condition of Ireland was anarchy subdued by force. Disestablishment was really not more serious than Free Trade, Reform, and other changes which the Conservative party had once resisted, and had since found to be mere hobgoblins.

Mr. Lowe spoke with his accustomed force and sarcasm. He denounced the tortuous course of the Government, which had lowered the House and lowered the estimation in which our public men should be held. On the general question, he reminded members who attempted to link together the Irish and the English Church of the tyrant Mezentius, who bound a dead body to a living one. The Irish Church had an establishment altogether superfluous and monstrous. In the course of a caustic attack upon Mr. Disraeli and his policy, Mr. Lowe said, 'We now find that the Government, instead of initiating measures, throw

out, like the cuttle-fish of which we read in Victor Hugo's novel, all sorts of tentacula for the purpose of catching up something which it may appropriate and make its own.' In conclusion, he observed, 'The Irish Church is founded on injustice; it is founded on the dominant rights of the few over the many, and shall not stand. You call it a missionary church. If so, its mission is unfulfilled. As a missionary church it has failed utterly; like some exotic brought from a far country, with infinite pains and useless trouble, it is kept alive with difficulty and expense in an ungrateful climate and an ungenial soil. The curse of barrenness is upon it; it has no leaves; it bears no blossoms; it yields no fruit. Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'

Mr. Disraeli's reply was not so noticeable from an argumentative as from a personal point of view. After defending the Government policy with regard to Lord Stanley's amendment, he made a bitter and pungent attack upon his present colleague, the Marquis of Salisbury, and upon Mr. Lowe. Of the former, he said that the noble lord was at no time wanting in imputing to the Government unworthy motives, and when he saw the amendment he believed immediately that they were about to betray their trust. 'I do not quarrel with the invective of the noble lord. The noble lord is a man of great talent, and he has vigour in his language. There is great vigour in his language, and no want of vindictiveness. I admit that now, speaking as a critic, and not perhaps as an impartial one, I must say I think

it wants finish. Considering that the noble lord has studied the subject, and that he has written anonymous articles against me before and since I was his colleague —I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague—I think it might have been accomplished more *ad unguem.*' Has the Foreign Secretary committed these encounters with the Prime Minister to the waters of Lethe? Happy waters! that can thus drown in oblivion the strongest political antagonisms.

Turning upon Mr. Lowe, Mr. Disraeli observed, 'When the bark is heard from this side, the right hon. member for Calne emerges, I will not say from his cave, but, perhaps, from a more cynical habitation. He joins immediately in the chorus of reciprocal malignity—

"And hails with horrid melody the moon."

The right hon. gentleman is a very remarkable man. He is a learned man, though he despises history. He can chop logic like Dean Aldrich; but what is more remarkable than his learning and his logic, is that power of spontaneous aversion which particularly characterises him. There is nothing that he likes, and almost everything that he hates. He hates the working classes of England. He hates the Roman Catholics of Ireland; he hates the Protestants of Ireland. He hates her Majesty's Ministers. And until the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire placed his hand upon the ark, he seemed almost to hate the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire. But now all is changed. Now we have the hour and

the man. But I believe the clock goes wrong, and the man is mistaken.' Mr. Disraeli then proceeded to affirm that he had never attacked any one in his life. Here the loud cries of 'Oh! oh!' and 'Peel' were so overwhelming that the orator adroitly added, 'unless I was first assailed.' But this also was followed by cries of dissent. The Prime Minister concluded by saying that under the guise of Liberalism, and under the pretence of legislating in the spirit of the age, Mr. Gladstone and his friends were, as he believed, about to seize upon the supreme authority of the realm. As long as, by the favour of the Queen, he stood there, he would oppose to the utmost of his ability the attempt they were making.

Mr. Gladstone replied that there were portions of Mr. Disraeli's speech of which, with every effort on his part, he failed to discern the relevancy; and there were others which appeared due to the influence of a heated imagination. For himself, he did not conceal his intention to separate Church from State in Ireland, and he asked the expiring Parliament to pronounce an opinion which would clear the way for its successor. The House then went to a division, when the numbers were—For Lord Stanley's amendment, 270; against, 331—majority against the Government, 61. On the second division, for going into committee, there appeared—For the motion, 328; against, 272—majority for Mr. Gladstone's motion, 56. An analysis shows that, including pairs, the first division gave in favour of Mr. Gladstone's policy a total of 343 members;

for the Government, 282. This only left 33 members to be accounted for out of the whole House, and they were thus distributed:—Tellers, 4; Speaker, 1; absent, 22; seats vacant, 2; boroughs disfranchised, 4. Of the 22 members absent, 17 were Liberals, amongst whom was Sir Roundell Palmer, who was opposed to Mr. Gladstone's Irish Church policy. The following Liberals voted against Mr. Gladstone, viz., Mr. E. Antrobus, Mr. J. I. Briscoe, Lord Cremorne, Sir J. Matheson, Mr. Herries Maxwell, Mr. E. Saunderson, and Mr. James Wyld. The following Conservatives voted with Mr. Gladstone, viz., Lord Bingham, Mr. H. A. Butler-Johnstone, Mr. R. A. Earle, Sir J. M'Kenna, and Mr. G. Morris. In the second division, the Conservative vote was increased by two, owing to the fact that two Liberal members strayed into the wrong lobby. Not only was Mr. Gladstone's majority much larger than had been anticipated by either political party, but it was almost twice as great a majority as that which in 1835 voted for the more limited policy involved in the appropriation clause.

The Liberal party was at length united in such a degree as had never, perhaps, previously been known; and great meetings were shortly held in London and the provinces to express sympathy with the agitation thus set on foot for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Two important demonstrations—one in favour of and the other against the Establishment—were held in St. James's Hall. Meantime the Government entered into negotiations with the Irish Roman Catholic prelates, but these

negotiations were afterwards definitively abandoned. The political warfare which now ensued was not always carried on with legitimate weapons. A striking example of this was found in certain charges brought against Mr. Gladstone—charges which the right hon: gentleman himself thus stated:—'First, that when at Rome I made arrangements with the Pope to destroy the Church Establishment in Ireland, with some other like matters, being myself a Roman Catholic at heart. Second, that during and since the Government of Sir Robert Peel I have resisted, and till now prevented, the preferment of Dr. Wynter. Third, that I have publicly condemned all support to the clergy in the three kingdoms from Church or public funds. Fourth, that when at Balmoral I refused to attend her Majesty at Crathie church. Fifth, that I have received the thanks of the Pope for my proceedings respecting the Irish Church. Sixth, that I am a member of a High Church Ritualistic congregation.' 'These statements, one and all,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'are untrue in letter and in spirit, from the beginning to the end.'

During the discussion on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions in the House of Commons, the Earl of Derby drew attention in the Upper House to what the noble earl described as their unconstitutional character, in so far as they asked her Majesty to place at the disposal of Parliament certain temporalities which had only been discussed in the Lower House. The leading Opposition peers severely criticised his lordship's course of proceeding, and the debate terminated without any definite

result. In the Commons, after a long discussion, Mr. Gladstone's first resolution was carried on the 30th of April. The right hon. gentleman, in summing up the debate, justified his mode of procedure, and declared with reference to Lord Derby's speech that he would not take the word of command from the House of Lords. He urged the House to accept the resolution, not as a panacea, but as part of a policy which would add strength and glory to the empire. Mr. Disraeli reiterated his objections to disestablishment, after which the House divided, when the numbers were—For the resolution, 330; against, 265—majority against the Government, 65. This increased majority caused the Premier to state that the relations between the Government and the House were now altered, and it became necessary for the Ministry to consider their position. On the 4th of May Ministerial explanations were tendered. Mr. Disraeli said he had waited upon the Queen, and informed her that the proper Constitutional course to take would be to dissolve Parliament and appeal to the country; at the same time he offered the resignation of Ministers, which, however, he qualified by the advice that if the Government could conduct public business with the co-operation of the House until the close of the session, it would be better to delay the dissolution until the autumn. Mr. Gladstone strongly protested against this course, and Mr. Lowe complained that no concession had been made by her Majesty to the two great divisions. Mr. Bright was still more emphatic in his censure, and maintained

that it was merely for the sake of prolonging his own term of office that Mr. Disraeli had made this outrageous demand on the indulgence of Parliament. The Government had no right to a dissolution, and they had no claim to remain in office when they could carry nothing of their own but a sixpenny income-tax.

The discussion was resumed upon the following day, and at length Mr. Disraeli said that the power held by the Government to dissolve Parliament related entirely to the Irish Church question, and that if any other difficulty arose it would be the duty of Ministers again to repair to the Sovereign. The second and third Irish Church resolutions having been carried in committee, a discussion arose respecting the Maynooth and other grants. The Premier having made some observations upon the divisions in the Liberal party as to these grants, a passage of arms arose between himself and Mr. Bright. The hon. member for Birmingham said, 'The Prime Minister the other night, with a mixture of pompousness and sometimes of servility, talked at large of the interviews which he had had with his Sovereign. I venture to say that a Minister who deceives his Sovereign is as guilty as the conspirator who would dethrone her. I don't charge the right hon. gentleman with deceiving his Sovereign. But if he has not changed the opinions which he held twenty-five years ago, and which in the main he said only a few weeks ago were right, then I fear he has not stated all it was his duty to state in the interview

he had with his Sovereign.' The Minister who put his Sovereign into the front of a great struggle like this was guilty of a very high crime and great misdemeanour against his Sovereign and against his country. Mr. Gladstone said of Mr. Disraeli's language that he had never heard such from a Prime Minister before. Mr. Disraeli retorted with vigour, and, having charged Mr. Bright with indulging in stale invective, challenged him to bring his charges to the vote of the House. This exciting scene terminated by the passing of Mr. Gladstone's resolution. As finally reported to the House, the resolutions were four in number. Three we have already given, and the fourth ran as follows:—'That when legislative effect shall have been given to the first resolution of this committee, respecting the Established Church of Ireland, it is right and necessary that the grant to Maynooth and the *Regium Donum* be discontinued, due regard being had to all personal interests.' Her Majesty, having replied to the address that she would not suffer her interests to stand in the way of any measures contemplated by Parliament, on the 14th of May Mr. Gladstone obtained leave to bring in a bill to prevent for a limited time new appointments in the Irish Church, and to restrain for the same period the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Ireland. On the 22nd, after a lengthy discussion, the Suspensory Bill was read a second time, the numbers in its favour being 312; against, 258—majority, 54. The bill passed the Commons, but upon the motion for its second

reading in the House of Lords it was defeated by a large majority—a result by no means unexpected.

This great question was now remitted for settlement to the constituencies. The Opposition had cleared the ground for action, and felt that the decision of the Lords on the Suspensory Bill would have little or no effect upon the country as to the general question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. On the 31st of July, the last Parliament elected under the Reform Bill of 1832 was prorogued with a view to its dissolution in the middle of November; it was understood that the new Parliament would be summoned in time to permit a crucial debate to take place upon the question of the Irish Church—in which the fate of the Government was involved—before the close of the year.

Early in August Mr. Gladstone began his electoral campaign in South-west Lancashire. Addressing a meeting at St. Helen's, he said he spoke in literal truth and not in mere sarcasm, when he affirmed of the Irish Church, 'You must not take away its abuses, because if you take them away there will be nothing left.' It was idle to draw a comparison between the Church of Ireland and the Church of England, for the latter entered into the natural life and purpose of the country. Mr. Gladstone also delivered addresses at Liverpool, Warrington, Wigan, Ormskirk, and other places. The right hon. gentleman's address, in which the policy of the Liberal party was duly set forth, appeared on the 9th of October. After referring to the defeat of Lord Russell's Ministry, and the enormous addition to the

public expenditure made by Mr. Disraeli's Government, Mr. Gladstone defended the removal of the Irish Establishment as the discharge of a debt of civil justice, and the blotting out of a national, almost a world-wide reproach. They should proceed with all due regard to existing interests, but a considerable property would probably remain at the disposal of the State. The mode of its application could only be suggested to Parliament by those who, as a Government, might have means and authority to examine into the wants of Ireland. These funds, however, should not be applied to the teaching of religion in any other form. He confidently asked the electors for their approval of the policy of the Opposition upon this great question. Election speeches followed each other in rapid succession, and the country could scarcely keep pace with Mr. Gladstone's extraordinary eloquence.

On the 11th of November Parliament was dissolved, and writs were issued for a new one, returnable on the 10th of December. The election for South-west Lancashire naturally absorbed the largest share of the public attention, as it was well known that no effort would be spared to defeat Mr. Gladstone. The nomination took place on the 22nd of November, the hustings being erected in front of St. George's Hall, Liverpool. The weather was bitterly cold, but several thousand persons were present. The usual electioneering noises were prevalent, and while Mr. Gladstone was speaking he was regaled with a choral performance of 'God save the Queen.' Placards of a satirical kind were exhibited,

the Conservatives being especially happy in their inscriptions. Some of these, according to the daily journals, provoked laughter from Mr. Gladstone himself. Amongst the most amusing 'hits' were 'Time table to Greenwich,' and 'Bright's disease and Lowe fever.' Yet good-humour prevailed during the proceedings. Mr. Gladstone, who spoke for forty minutes, referred to the elections which had already taken place, where the Ministerial candidates had been scattered right and left. He reviewed the acts of the Government, and repeated his charges of extravagance. He also maintained that some of the provisions of the Reform Act must be amended. Alluding to the abortive Ministerial propositions brought forward by Lord Mayo in the preceding March, the right hon. gentleman declared that the Cabinet were without a policy, and there was no guarantee that they would take any well-defined course. He denied that the Liberal policy was calculated to injure the cause of Protestantism, and pointed to the elections in Scotland, a thoroughly Protestant part of the kingdom, as a proof that the people had no faith in the 'No Popery' cry. Mr. Gladstone then referred to the Liberal victories in the North of Ireland, and appealed to the electors of South-west Lancashire to permit him to speak the words of truth and justice in the House of Commons in the name and with the authority of that important constituency.

There was a great preponderance of feeling in favour of Mr. Gladstone at the hustings; but on the following day he was defeated at the poll, the numbers being—

Cross (C.), 7,729; Turner (C.), 7,676; Gladstone (L.), 7,415; and Grenfell (L.), 6,939. The leader of the Opposition issued the following brief address to the electors:—'Gentlemen, I return my most cordial thanks to the 7,415 electors who supported me at the poll, and to the numerous and zealous friends who have so ably acted on my behalf. It is to me a matter of lively satisfaction, which I can never lose, that I received a large majority of votes within the district of Liverpool.' The right hon. gentleman, however, was not without a seat in the House, having been already elected for Greenwich. The Liberals of that borough, as a precautionary measure against a possible contingency elsewhere, determined upon putting Mr. Gladstone in nomination, together with Mr. Alderman Salomons. Both were returned by large majorities, the numbers being—Mr. Alderman Salomons (L.), 6,645; Mr. Gladstone (L.), 6,551; Sir H. W. Parker (C.), 4,661; and Lord Mahon (C.), 4,342.

Although the Liberals sustained several serious single defeats during the elections—notably, those of Mr. Gladstone in South-west Lancashire, the Marquis of Hartington in North Lancashire, and Mr. J. Stuart Mill in Westminster—there was an enormous preponderance of Liberal feeling manifested throughout the country. The Liberal majority was placed by the daily journals at 115. The Conservatives were, of course, strong in the English counties; but in the boroughs they could only return 94 members, as against 214 Liberal representatives. In Scotland the

Liberal majority was still more marked. The Liberals took all the burghs, while the Conservatives only secured seven seats in the counties, as against twenty-three by their opponents. Ireland also gave a majority for the Liberals, both in counties and boroughs. Since 1832 no such party majority had been known. An analysis distinguishing the three kingdoms shows that in this remarkable election of 1868 the total Liberal vote in England and Wales was 1,231,450; the Conservative vote, 824,057—majority, 407,393. The total Liberal vote in Scotland, with three elections undecided (which ultimately added a slight further gain to the Liberals), was 123,410; the Conservative vote, 23,391—majority, 100,019. The total Liberal vote in Ireland was 53,379; the Conservative vote, 36,082—majority, 17,297. The gross Liberal vote was thus 1,408,239; and the gross Conservative vote, 883,530, leaving a majority in favour of the former of 524,709. Another test also demonstrated the strength of the Liberals. The 92 constituencies gained by them throughout the elections contained a population of 6,611,950; while the 69 won by the Conservatives contained only a population of 5,177,534, leaving a balance on the side of the Liberals of 1,434,416. There were no fewer than 227 out of the whole number of members returned who had no seat in the previous Parliament, being upwards of one-third of the entire House of Commons.

The national verdict being thus strongly in favour of Mr. Gladstone's policy, Mr. Disraeli did not adopt the usual course of waiting for its endorsement by the

new Parliament; but, in a statement addressed to his supporters, announced that Ministers had tendered their resignations to her Majesty. Having briefly reviewed in this circular the circumstances under which the general election was conducted, and the question at issue, the Premier said it was clear that the existing Administration could not expect to command the confidence of the newly-elected House of Commons; but he added that the members of the Government would continue to offer an uncompromising resistance to the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church.

Mr. Gladstone, who was naturally the only Liberal statesman to whom her Majesty could have recourse, received the Royal summons on the 4th of December. In obedience to the Queen's commands he undertook to form a Ministry. On the 9th the new Government was completed, and on the following day the Premier issued a brief address to his constituents. Contrary to original expectation, the new cabinet included Mr. Bright, as President of the Board of Trade. Referring to this matter in a speech at Birmingham, the hon. member said that he had never aspired to the dignity of office; and when the question was put to him whether he would step into the position in which he now found himself, the answer which came from his heart was that of the Shunamite woman to the prophet, 'I dwell among mine own people.' Happily, he trusted that the time had come when in this country an honest man might enter the service of the Crown

and at the same time not feel it in any degree necessary to dissociate himself from his own people.

The new Premier and the various members of the Ministry were unopposed on presenting themselves for re-election to their respective constituencies. Speaking at Greenwich, Mr. Gladstone said that in view of the recent manifestation throughout the country, it was not unnatural that the Disraeli Government should have melted away before the Parliament which they had called into existence—without looking that Parliament in the face, and without asking from it the judgment they had undertaken to challenge—melted away, in the words of our greatest poet, 'like a mockery king of snow.' Referring to the question of the Ballot, Mr. Gladstone said that the acts of intimidation which had characterised many of the recent contests had led him to the belief that, whether by open voting or whatsoever means, the liberty of the elector must be secured. It would also be the duty of the Liberal Government forthwith to remedy the grievances inflicted by the rate-paying clauses of the Reform Act. Touching upon education, the relations between capital and labour, and the public expenditure, he observed that no Administration could be expected at once to deal with every great public question, but he should be much disappointed if there was not an immediate reduction in the estimates. With regard to the Irish Church, he denied that there was any analogy whatever between that Church and the Established Church of England, while the former had been condemned by the voice of

the people in the three kingdoms. 'We confide (said the Premier) in the traditions we have received of our fathers; we confide in the soundness both of the religious and of the civil principles that prevail; we confide in the sacredness of that cause of justice in which we are engaged, and with that confidence and persuasion we are prepared to go forward.'

A new Liberal Government—able in many of its own constituent elements, and supported by the overwhelming vote of the people—was thus installed before the close of the year. The task before it was arduous, for although it owed its formation ostensibly to the national desire for the settlement of one great question, there were other questions looming in the distance which might prove a source of difficulty and danger. However, for the special work it was pledged to accomplish, no Government could have been more fully strengthened and equipped than that which had Mr. Gladstone for its chief.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIBERALISM.

The Difficulties of Disestablishment—Attacks upon Mr. Gladstone's Measure—The Premier's Speech on unfolding his Scheme—Details of the Bill—The *Regium Donum* and the Maynooth Grant—Financial Results of the Operations—Character of the Premier's Address—Debates upon the Bill—Speeches of Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Bright, Mr. Gathorne Hardy, and others—Mr. Gladstone's Reply—Second Reading of the Bill carried by an overwhelming Majority—Its subsequent Stages—Reception in the Lords—A memorable Division—The Measure passes—Its Character described—The Irish Land Bill introduced—Mr. Gladstone's comprehensive Speech—Details of the Scheme—Nature of the Government Proposals—They are attacked by Dr. Ball and Mr. Disraeli—Singular Division on the Second Reading—The Bill passes both Houses—Elementary Education Bill introduced—Another important Measure carried—Massacre of English Travellers by Greek Brigands—Proceedings in Parliament—The Franco-German War—Position of England—Publication of the proposed Franco-Prussian Treaty—Mr. Gladstone on English Neutrality—Legislative Changes in 1870—Release of the Fenian Prisoners.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Gladstone was thus powerfully sustained by the country in his resolve to disestablish the Irish Church, there were many persons who doubted the successful issue of his policy. The magnitude of the task before the new Premier was such as might well appal any statesman. It is one thing to pass an abstract resolution declaring disestablishment advisable and necessary; it is another to cope with the details and difficulties which an actual measure involves. This great line of public policy and action had certainly been approved by the constituencies with unmistakable clear-

ness; but Mr. Gladstone himself did not disguise the fact that the labour before the Government was of a most arduous and intricate character. A large section of the Conservative party still believed it to be impossible of achievement, and their view was shared by nearly the whole of the clergy. The undertaking was, perhaps, the greatest and the most difficult to which any statesman of modern times had committed himself; but fortunately for Mr. Gladstone, the Liberal party never wavered in their allegiance to him; and he was enabled to construct, and carry through with few serious alterations, the measure to which he and his Cabinet stood pledged.

The spirit in which these disestablishment proposals were received by the warmest defenders of the Irish Church, may be gathered from the reports of the public meetings and of the various Synods held at this period. At one of the latter, the measure was denounced as 'highly offensive to Almighty God.' Speaking at Cork, Lord Bandon said that compromise was utterly impracticable, as the plunder of the Church was only preparatory to the plunder of the land. He had no security for his property for to-morrow. The Bishop of Ossory described the bill as 'framed in a spirit of inveterate hostility to the Church.' The Earl of Carrick maintained that it was 'the greatest national sin ever committed.' Lord de Vesci alluded to it as 'a perilous weakening of the foundations of property;' while the Archdeacon of Ossory, addressing the same meeting as his lordship, exhorted his hearers to 'trust in God and keep their

powder dry.' The Archdeacon, however, was careful to explain that in thus using a memorable phrase of Oliver Cromwell's he made no reference to 'carnal weapons.' In the sittings of Convocation, Archdeacon Denison deplored 'the great national sin' into which the country seemed to be plunging. Dr. Jebb asked the assembly to express its 'utter detestation of a most ungodly, wicked, and abominable measure;' while Archdeacon Moore insisted that at all hazards the Queen must interfere to prevent 'this dreadful thing'—'better jeopardise her crown than destroy the Church.'

But the language of many of the Orange laity was still more extraordinary. At a meeting held in Exeter Hall, the rejection of the bill by the Peers, and the prompt dismissal of the Ministry by her Majesty, were demanded. The speeches delivered were of a most violent character, the Government being spoken of as 'traitors,' 'robbers,' and 'political brigands,' while the statements made by the Liberal press and Liberal speakers were characterised as lies. A Conservative member of Parliament said that there were thousands of Protestants in his part of the country who thought Mr. Gladstone was a 'traitor to his Queen, his country, and his God,' and the righteous retribution which he (the member) would visit upon the right hon. gentleman was 'perpetual exclusion from power for having dared to put his hand on the ark of God.' Another speaker described the Cabinet as 'a Cabinet of brigands.' All Orangemen, of course, were not so vio-

lent as those whose utterances have been cited; and we have only introduced these examples as showing the calumnies heaped upon Mr. Gladstone for undertaking what he deemed to be an act of simple justice towards Ireland and the too long neglected Irish people.

On the 1st of March, Mr. Gladstone unfolded his scheme in the House of Commons. For three hours the orator fixed the attention of a densely-crowded chamber while he described the Ministerial method of dealing with the Irish Church. As Mr. Disraeli afterwards said, there was not a single redundant word in this remarkable speech. The heads of the Acts relating to the Established Church of Ireland and Maynooth, and the first resolution of the previous session, having been read, Mr. Gladstone moved for leave to introduce a bill 'to put an end to the Established Church in Ireland, to make provision in respect to the temporalities thereof, and of the Royal College of Maynooth.' Commencing by a brief review of the previous stages of the question, and answering in the outset some of the principal objections to the Government policy, the speaker recalled the attention of the House to the pledges given by those who had taken up the subject. The bill for putting an immediate end to the Establishment and the public endowment of the Irish Church would be a thorough, but at the same time a liberal and indulgent measure, prompt in its operation, and final in every respect. Dividing his analysis of the bill into three parts—its immediate effect, its effect at a certain time fixed (but

not unalterably) at January 1, 1871, and its operation when the process of winding up the affairs of the Irish Church was brought to a close—Mr. Gladstone observed that the bill provided, on the first head, that the present Ecclesiastical Commission should be at once wound up, and a new commission appointed for ten years, in which the property of the Irish Church, subject to life interests, should be vested from the time of the passing of the bill. Therefore, technically and legally, there would be an immediate disendowment of the Irish Church; but disestablishment would be postponed until the 1st of January, 1871. The union between the Churches of England and Ireland would be dissolved at that date, and all ecclesiastical corporations would be abolished. The Ecclesiastical Courts would cease, and the Ecclesiastical Laws would no longer be binding as laws; except that they would be understood to exist as the terms of the voluntary contract between clergy and laity, until they were altered by the governing body of the disestablished Church. With regard to the interval between the passing of the Act and the date of January 1st, 1871, and during the reorganisation of the Church, it was proposed that appointments should be made to spiritual offices, but that they should not carry with them the freehold or confer vested interests. In the same provisional and temporary manner, appointments would be made to vacant bishoprics, but only on the prayer of the bishops to consecrate a particular person to a vacancy; and these appointments would carry with them no vested interests and no rights of peerage. Crown

livings vacant during the same period would be filled up on similar principles.

In order to assist the reorganisation of the Church, and to favour the creation of a body which could negotiate on behalf of the Church with the Commissioners, the Convention Act, which prevented the assembling of the clergy and laity of the Church, would be repealed; and power would be taken to the Queen in council to recognise any governing body which the clergy and laity of the disestablished Church might agree on, and which actually represented both; and that body would be incorporated. Mr. Gladstone assumed that by January 1, 1871, or some other date to be incorporated in the bill, this governing body would have been constituted; and he then proceeded to explain the complicated details of the arrangements for dealing with the Church and its property in a disestablished condition. In this long and lucid explanation he first dealt with vested interests. A vested interest he defined to be the title of an incumbent—including in this term bishops and dignitaries as well as beneficed clergy—to receive a certain annuity out of the property of the Church (fees, pew-rents, &c., being put out of the question) in consideration of the performance of a certain duty. The Commissioners would ascertain the amount of each incumbent's income, deducting what he paid for curates; and, so long as he continued to discharge his duties, that income would be paid him; but he might apply to have this commuted into an annuity for life. It was not proposed to interfere compulsorily with the position of

the incumbent in relation to his freehold or the incidents of his landlordship, with three exceptions—that his title to the tithe rent-charge would be vested immediately in the Commissioners; that the freehold of churches wholly in ruins would be taken from the incumbent; and that the peerage rights of the Irish bishops would cease at once. Mr. Gladstone next observed that the compensation to curates would be of two kinds: those whom he described as 'transitory curates' would be dealt with on a principle borrowed from the Civil Service Superannuation Act, and would be dismissed with a gratuity; but permanent curates, viz., those who had been employed in the same parish from January 1, 1869, to January 1, 1871—or had left their employment not from their own free-will or misconduct—would be entitled to compensation on the same principle as the incumbents. This compensation would be paid by the incumbents. It was not proposed to touch private endowments, and these would be the only marketable property conveyed to the Church. The Premier, however, limited the term to money contributed from private sources since the year 1660, and pointed out that it would not include churches and glebe houses. As to churches, wherever the 'governing body' made an application, accompanied by a declaration that they meant either to maintain the church for public worship, or to remove it to some more convenient position, it would be handed over to them; but in the case of St. Patrick's Cathedral, and about a dozen other churches partaking of the character of national memorials, the Commissioners would be em-

powered to allot a moderate sum for their maintenance. Those churches which were not in use, and which were not capable of being restored for purposes of worship, would be handed over to the Board of Works, with an allocation of funds sufficient for their maintenance. Touching upon the very difficult point of glebe houses, Mr. Gladstone announced that he had seen reason to modify his views of the previous year. They were not marketable property, for, though an expenditure upon them of £1,200,000 could be traced distinctly, their annual value was only £18,600, and there was a quarter of a million of building charges upon them which the State would have to pay on coming into possession. It was therefore proposed to hand over the glebe houses to the governing body on their paying the building charges, and they would be allowed to purchase a certain amount of glebe land round the houses on paying a fair valuation. The burial grounds adjacent to churches would go with the churches, all existing rights being preserved, and other burial grounds would be handed over to the guardians of the poor.

The next question was one of peculiar difficulty. Mr. Gladstone reminded hon. members that it was at all times part of the views of those who proposed the resolutions advocating disestablishment, that with this Act should come the final cessation of all relations between the State and the Presbyterian clergy in Ireland, and between the State and the College of Maynooth. The *Regium Donum* and the Maynooth Grant amounted

together to about £70,000, and the Premier announced that the Presbyterian ministers, recipients of the *Regium Donum*, would be compensated on the same principles as the incumbents of the disestablished Church; while in regard both to the grant to Maynooth and the grants to Presbyterian colleges—in order to give ample time for the necessary arrangements, and to avoid the sudden shock and disappointment to individuals—there would be a valuation of all the interests in these grants at 14 years' purchase of the capital amount annually voted. In propounding an elaborate scheme for the final extinction of the tithe rent charge in 45 years, Mr. Gladstone said landlords would be allowed, if they chose, to purchase it at $22\frac{1}{2}$ years' purchase, and if they did not accept the offer, they would come under another and a general operation. There would be a compulsory sale to them of the tithe rent charge, at a rate which would yield $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; and, on the other side, they would be credited with a loan at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., payable in instalments in 45 years. The power of purchase would remain in the hands of the tenants for three years after the passing of the Act, and it was also proposed that the tenants should have a right of pre-emption of all lands sold by the commission, and that three-fourths of the purchase money might be left on the security of the land.

Mr. Gladstone thus detailed the financial results of these operations:—The tithe rent charge would yield £9,000,000; lands and perpetuity rents, £6,250,000; money, £750,000—total, £16,000,000; the present value

of the property of the Irish Church. Of this, the bill would dispose of £8,650,000, viz., vested interests of incumbents, £4,900,000; curates, £800,000; lay compensation, £900,000; private endowments, £500,000; building charges, £250,000; commutation of the Maynooth Grant and the *Regium Donum*, £1,100,000; and expenses of the commission, £200,000. Consequently, there would remain a surplus of between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000; and the question arose, said the Premier, amid considerable excitement, 'What shall we do with it?' He held it to be indispensable, under the circumstances, that the purposes to which the surplus was applied should be Irish. Further, they should not be religious, although they must be final, and open the door to no new controversy. After discussing various suggestions, some of which he dismissed as impossible, and others as radically wrong, the speaker announced, quoting the preamble of the bill, that the Government had concluded to apply the surplus to the relief of unavoidable calamities and suffering, not provided for by the Poor Law. The sum of £185,000 would be allocated for lunatic asylums; £20,000 a-year would be awarded to idiot asylums; £30,000 to training schools for the deaf, dumb, and blind; £15,000 for the training of nurses; £10,000 for reformatories; and £51,000 to county infirmaries—in all £311,000 a-year. Mr. Gladstone claimed that by the provision of all these requirements they would be able to combine very great reforms; and they would also be in a better condition for inviting the Irish landlord to accede to a change in the county

cess, as they were able to offer by this plan a considerable diminution in its burden. The plan for disposing of the residue he believed to be a good and solid plan, full of public advantage. After touching upon possible errors in his statement, and announcing that he should be happy to welcome suggestions from any quarter, Mr. Gladstone referred to the great transition which the Government were asking the clergymen of the Church of Ireland to undergo, and to the privileges which the laity were called upon to abate. He concluded with a peroration which—inasmuch as it must always be regarded as one of the right hon. gentleman's happiest efforts—we shall place before the reader in its entirety :—

'I do not know in what country so great a change, so great a transition has been proposed for the ministers of a religious communion who have enjoyed for many ages the preferred position of an Established Church. I can well understand that to many in the Irish Establishment such a change appears to be nothing less than ruin and destruction; from the height on which they now stand the future is to them an abyss, and their fears recall the words used in *King Lear*, when Edgar endeavours to persuade Gloster that he has fallen over the cliffs of Dover, and says :—

> "Ten masts at each make not the altitude
> Which thou hast perpendicularly fallen ;
> Thy life's a miracle ! "

And yet but a little while after the old man is relieved from his delusion, and finds he has not fallen at all. So I trust that when, instead of the fictitious and adventitious aid on which we have too long taught the Irish Establishment to lean, it should come to place its trust in its own resources, in its own great mission, in all that it can draw from the energy of its ministers and its members, and the high hopes and promises of the gospel that it teaches, it will find that it has entered upon a new era of existence—an era bright with hope and potent for good. At any rate, I think the day has certainly come when an end is finally to be put to that union, not between the Church and religious association, but between the Establishment and the State, which was commenced under circumstances little auspicious,

and has endured to be a source of unhappiness to Ireland, and of discredit and scandal to England. There is more to say. This measure is in every sense a great measure—great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but interesting detail, and great as a testing measure; for it will show for one and all of us of what metal we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility—great and foremost upon those who occupy this bench. We are especially chargeable, nay, deeply guilty, if we have either dishonestly, as some think, or even prematurely or unwisely challenged so gigantic an issue. I know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall upon those men, those Phaetons of politics, who, with hands unequal to the task, attempt to guide the chariot of the sun. But the responsibility, though heavy, does not exclusively press upon us; it presses upon every man who has to take part in the discussion and decision upon this bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligations to raise the level of his vision and expand its scope in proportion with the greatness of the matter in hand. The working of our constitutional government itself is upon its trial, for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity to deal with a question greater or more profound. And more especially, sir, is the credit and fame of this great Assembly involved; this Assembly, which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honours of brilliant triumphs, of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would, indeed, have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and your ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame, I venture to say, will receive no small, no insensible addition. I must not ask gentlemen opposite to concur in this view, emboldened as I am by the kindness they have shown me in listening with patience to a statement which could not have been other than tedious; but I pray them to bear with me for a moment while, for myself and my colleagues, I say we are sanguine of the issue. We believe, and for my part I am deeply convinced, that when the final consummation shall arrive, and when the words are spoken that shall give the force of law to the work embodied in this measure—the work of peace and justice—those words will be echoed upon every shore where the name of Ireland or the name of Great Britain has been heard, and the answer to them will come back in the approving verdict of civilised mankind.'

The scheme so admirably and luminously expounded was received with vehement demonstrations of approval

by the supporters of the Ministry. The exposition which had been looked forward to with some misgiving was admitted to be a complete triumph. The Conservatives, who were naturally opposed to the details of the measure, agreed with their opponents in admiring the excellence of the arrangement, the masterly marshalling of facts, and the lucidity of detail which characterised Mr. Gladstone's statement.*

Mr. Disraeli did not oppose the introduction of the bill, but demanded a period of three weeks in which to consider it. Mr. Gladstone ultimately agreed that the second reading should not be taken for sixteen days. On the 18th, accordingly, on the order for the second reading of the bill, the leader of the Opposition moved its rejection. His speech on that occasion was described by the *Times* as 'flimsiness relieved with spangles—the definition of a columbine's skirt.' He

* From amongst the many tributes paid to Mr. Gladstone's eloquence on this occasion, we cannot refrain from quoting one which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, and which well interpreted the general sentiment of those who listened to the ex-Premier's oration on that 'night of justice'—a night never to be forgotten :—'We shall not hesitate to say that Mr. Gladstone never before, amidst all the triumphs that mark his long course of honour and success, displayed more vigorous grasp of his subject, more luminous clearness in its development, earnestness more lofty, or eloquence more appropriate and refined than in the memorable deliverance of last evening. Less than the most complete mastery of the complex scheme, from its mightiest principle to its minutest item, would have brought down that remarkable exhibition of intellect from the high level of an historical oration to a cold and weary evolution of clauses and calculations. But with that consummate skill which in old days made a fine art of finance, and taught us all the romance of the revenue, Mr Gladstone made his statistics ornamental, and deftly wove the stiffest strings of figures into the web of his exposition. Scarcely even so much as

began in the philosophical vein, 'and while we freely acknowledge (observed the journal just quoted) that Mr. Disraeli's fun is exquisite, his philosophy is simply detestable. Then he became historical and didactic, and his historical paradoxes, which were acceptable enough in his earlier political novels, fell flat when reproduced as serious arguments to arrest the attention and sway the judgment of the House of Commons.' He objected to disestablishment because he was in favour of the union of Church and State, by which he understood an arrangement which armed the State with the highest influence, and prevented the Church from sinking into a sacerdotal corporation. Mr. Disraeli dwelt with much earnestness on the possible evil consequences of divorcing authority from religion, and warned the House against establishing an independent religious power in the country, which might be

glancing at his notes, he advanced with an oratorical step, which positively never once faltered from exordium to peroration of his amazing task; omitting nothing, slurring nothing, confusing nothing; but pouring from his prodigious faculty of thought, memory, and speech an explanation so lucid that none of all the many points which he made was obscure to any of his listeners when he had finished. And, charged as the speech necessarily was with hard and stern matter of fact and figure, the intense earnestness, the sincere satisfaction of the speaker at the act of concord and justice he was inaugurating gave such elasticity and play to his genius, that nowhere was the clause so dry or the calculation so involved, but some gentle phrase of respect, some high invocation of principle, some bright illumination of the theme from actual life, some graceful compliment to his hearers, lightened the passage of these mountains of statistics, and kept the House spell-bound by that rich and energetic voice. This praise may seem extravagant; but though Mr. Gladstone has done many things of marvellous intellectual and oratorical force, his exposition last evening of the measure from which will assuredly date the pacification and happiness of Ireland, was a Parliamentary achievement unparalleled even by himself.'

stronger than the civil power, and not always in agreement with it. As to disendowment, if a State seized on the property of a Church without assigning a reason, he held it to be spoliation; but with a reason, valid or not, it was a confiscation. The title of the Irish Church was stronger than that of any other landlord, and no valid reason had been assigned for depriving her of her property. Amid great amusement, Mr. Disraeli sketched a hypothetical case of the extension of the Government principle to private property—one set of landless Irish gentry demanding the confiscation of the estates of their more fortunate fellow-countrymen, from no motive but jealousy; he also referred to corporate property, as though the unendowed London hospitals were to demand the confiscation of the revenues of Guy's, St. Bartholomew's, and St. Thomas's. The right hon. gentleman then criticised, minutely and sarcastically, the various details of the measure, and, in concluding an address of two hours' duration, declared that England could not afford another Revolution.

As Mr. Disraeli, however, had himself effected a greater revolution when he 'dished the Whigs' upon the question of Reform, his declaration failed to excite any emotion approaching to terror. His address did not rise to the level of his previous great speeches, and it was manifest that the Opposition felt their position had not been put in its strongest light until the addresses of Dr. Ball and Mr. Gathorne Hardy had been delivered. The former, after a lengthened examination of the bill, predicted that it would produce general discontent

and a severe shock to the rights of property, which would bear fruits in an agitation on the land question, and would be the precedent for more serious organic changes.

Mr. Bright dealt with the question on broad and general principles. Alluding to Mr. Disraeli's contention that the Establishment was a protector of freedom of religion and toleration, he remarked that Mr. Disraeli seemed to read a different history from anybody else, or that he made his own, and, like Voltaire, made it better without facts than with them. Mr. Bright maintained that the Establishment had failed in every way, and demanded, 'Do you think it will be a misappropriation of the surplus funds of this great Establishment to apply them to some objects such as those described in the bill? Do you not think that from the charitable dealing with these matters even a sweeter incense may arise than when these vast funds are applied to maintain three times the number of clergy that can be of the slightest use to the Church with which they are connected? We can do but little, it is true. We cannot relume the extinguished lamp of reason. We cannot make the deaf to hear. We cannot make the dumb to speak. It is not given to us—

> "From the thick film to purge the visual ray,
> And on the sightless eyeballs pour the day."

But at least we can lessen the load of affliction, and we can make life more tolerable to vast numbers who suffer. . . . . I see this measure giving tranquillity

to our people, greater strength to the realm, and adding a new lustre and a new dignity to the Crown. I dare claim for this bill the support of all good and thoughtful people within the bounds of the British Empire, and I cannot doubt that, in its early and great results, it will have the blessing of the Supreme, for I believe it to be founded on those principles of justice and mercy which are the glorious attributes of His eternal reign.' This noble and dignified peroration, which would have seemed daring almost coming from any other lips, exercised a very powerful and impressive effect upon the House. The speech to which it formed a fitting conclusion was justly characterised as 'a magnificent oration.'

Sir Roundell Palmer opposed the Government measure, assigning for so doing his sense of an imperious and overwhelming necessity. He assented to disestablishment, but there was no precedent for disendowment. He admitted, however, that the bill must pass, and urged the Irish Church not to take Mr. Disraeli's advice to hold back and refuse to co-operate in its reorganisation. Mr. Lowe made a smart attack upon Mr. Disraeli, and after defending the bill, pointed out that the Irish Church had had many opportunities of reconciling itself with the Irish people, but had neglected them all. Its fall had been a matter of certainty for years; 'and,' concluded the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'the present state of things in Ireland is no longer unalterable. We can alter it, and we will.' Mr. Hardy, who gave Mr. Gladstone full credit for

having redeemed his pledges to sweep away all that he had once deemed precious, said he could discover no reason for this attack on the Irish Church but jealousy, such as animated Haman. He denied that the Church was a badge of conquest—also that it had done anything to deserve destruction. 'The Irish question' was not the cretaion of the Church, but of the English State. He maintained that the Act of Union was violated by the destruction of the Church, and that it would be necessary to alter the Coronation Oath. Having examined the provisions of the measure, Mr. Hardy said that, believing to the best of his judgment, and to the best of the light of his conscience, that the bill was alike wrong in the sight of God and against the interests of his country, he did not hesitate to denounce and oppose the sacrilegious measure.

Mr. Gladstone replied, eliciting loud cheers when he remarked of the latter portion of Mr. Hardy's speech that it showed his fitness for the task which Burke disclaimed, viz., 'to draw an indictment against a whole nation.' But even in his libellous picture of the Irish people, serious evils were admitted for which Mr. Hardy had no remedy. The Government had one, which of necessity they proposed piecemeal. The Premier maintained that Sir Roundell Palmer, in giving up Establishment, had abandoned the worthier part of the whole argument. He also showed that the bill would in no way touch the Royal supremacy. After briefly reviewing the course of the debate, he said that the charges brought against the Government only proved that they

had fairly fulfilled their pledge. 'As the clock points rapidly towards the dawn,' said the speaker in conclusion, 'so are rapidly flowing out the years, the months, the days that remain to the existence of the Irish Established Church. . . . . Not now are we opening this great question. Opened, perhaps, it was when the Parliament which expired last year pronounced upon it that emphatic judgment which can never be recalled. Opened it was, further, when in the months of autumn the discussions which were held in every quarter of the country turned mainly on the subject of the Irish Church. Prosecuted another stage it was, when the completed elections discovered to us a manifestation of the national verdict more emphatic than, with the rarest exceptions, has been witnessed during the whole of our Parliamentary history. The good cause was further advanced towards its triumphant issue when the silent acknowledgment of the late Government that they declined to contest the question was given by their retirement from office, and their choosing a less responsible position, from which to carry on a more desultory warfare against the policy which they had in the previous session unsuccessfully attempted to resist. Another blow will soon be struck in the same good cause, and I will not intercept it one single moment more.'

The division was then taken. The 'Ides of March' had, indeed, proved disastrous for the Irish Church. Great excitement prevailed in the House, and through all its approaches. When the numbers were announced, it was found that there appeared—For the second reading

of the Government Bill, 368; against, 250—majority, 118. This majority was overwhelming and decisive; it was larger than had been expected on either side. There were actually present in the House, including tellers, 622 members—a number exceeded upon only one or two previous occasions. The division conclusively demonstrated the progress of public opinion upon the question of disestablishment, the majority being almost double that of the previous year. The composition of the House was thus accounted for:—Ayes, 368; Noes, 250; tellers, 4; Speaker, 1; Conservative seats vacant, 8; Liberal seats vacant, 6; and absentees, 21. Lord Elcho, Sir Roundell Palmer, and Mr. Briscoe (Liberals) voted with the Noes. Six Conservatives voted with Mr. Gladstone, while of the absentees eight were Liberals and thirteen Conservatives. On both sides the Whips exercised the greatest vigilance, and the number of members whose absence could not be accounted for was exceptionally small.

The enormous support which Mr. Gladstone thus received for his proposals fortunately attended the progress of the Irish Church Bill through its remaining stages. The progress of the bill through committee was exceedingly slow, but at length—exactly three months from its introduction in the Commons—the third reading came on. The motion was strenuously opposed, Mr. Disraeli declaring that the passing of the measure would lead to the ascendancy of the Papal power in Ireland, with a consequent reaction in the country. Mr. Gladstone made

a final and eloquent defence of his scheme. He maintained that he was only carrying into effect the views of Mr. Pitt and other supporters of religious equality in Ireland. The measure was neither unjust, illiberal, nor harsh; neither would it permanently cripple Protestantism in Ireland. 'The Church,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'may have much to regret in respect to temporal splendour, yet the day is to come when it will be said of her, as of the temple of Jerusalem, that "the glory of the latter house is greater than that of the former;" and when the most loyal and faithful of her children will learn not to forget that at length the Parliament of England took courage, and the Irish Church was disestablished and disendowed.' The Government had again a large majority, the numbers being—For the third reading, 361; against, 247—majority, 114. The Premier, however, was still subjected to coarse vituperation out of doors, and even certain English Protestant journals published unfounded reports concerning the Premier's alleged relations with the Church of Rome—reports only intended to embarrass the author of disestablishment at a critical moment.

The Irish Church Bill led to many animated discussions in the House of Lords. At one time it was feared that it would be thrown out upon the second reading. The Earl of Derby and Lord Cairns argued with great eloquence against the measure, but it found a supporter of equal intellectual power on the episcopal bench. The Bishop of St. David's—whose known

learning and character had great weight with the country—stigmatised as heathenish the vain and superstitious notion that church property was in any sense divine—that material offerings might be accepted by the Most High as supplying some want of the Divine nature. Miss Burdett Coutts's market at Spitalfields was as religious a work as Mr. Guinness's restoration of Dublin Cathedral. He was as eager as any one for Protestant ascendancy, but ascendancy of a religious, moral, and intellectual character, the ascendancy of truth and reason over error. Of that ascendancy he did not believe the Irish Church to be a pillar. He had no fear of, because no belief in, the power of the Pope. Everywhere he saw it on the decline, and a serious blow would be dealt at it in Ireland by removing a grievance which gave the priesthood an artificial hold on the sentiment of the people. The Bishop of Peterborough strongly attacked the bill, and Lord Derby denounced it as a scheme the political folly of which was only equalled by its moral turpitude. Lords Westbury and Cairns also made fierce onslaughts upon the measure (though the former voted for it), but the peers did not follow Lord Derby's advice to reject the bill at once. There appeared for the second reading, 179; against, 146—majority for the bill, 33. This was the largest division in the House of Lords within living memory, no fewer than 325 peers having taken part in it. Eighteen also paired. Amongst Conservatives who voted with the Ministry were the Marquises of Bath and

Salisbury, the Earls of Carnarvon, Devon, and Nelson, and Lords Wharncliffe, Lytton, Calthorpe, and Abinger. The votes of the episcopal bench attracted considerable attention. Neither of the English Archbishops voted, but the Archbishop of Dublin voted against the bill, which was supported by the solitary vote of Dr. Thirlwall, Bishop of St. David's. The Bishop of Oxford (Dr. Wilberforce), though present, did not vote. Thirteen English and two Irish Bishops pronounced against the bill, while there were many absentees, including the Bishops of Carlisle, Exeter, Manchester, Salisbury, and Winchester. Lord Clancarty alone signed a protest against the bill, as being, in his lordship's judgment, 'directly at variance with the obligations imposed upon the Sovereign by the coronation oath.'

The debate which took place on the second reading fully sustained the reputation of the House of Lords for eloquence, if it did not indeed enhance it. The bill passed this second stage owing to a feeling on the part of many peers, that a measure which was thus supported by the country and a great majority of the Lower House ought not to be lightly thrown out. The question now arose, What would be done in committee? Various amendments were carried of an important nature, to some of which the Government could not agree. The bill eventually passed the Lords by 121 to 114, under a protest signed by Lord Derby and forty-three temporal and two spiritual peers. The Lords' amendments were considered by the Commons, and the chief of them were disagreed with. They were

then sent back to the Lords, and an animated debate ensued in the Upper House. Lord Grey complained that the Lords were humiliated and degraded, and Lord Salisbury said their lordships were called upon to yield to the arrogant will of a single man. The Earl of Winchilsea compared Mr. Gladstone to Jack Cade, and after hinting at the coming of an Oliver Cromwell, declared that he was ready for the block sooner than surrender. A conference upon contested points afterwards took place between Lord Granville and Lord Cairns, and a compromise was arrived at. This compromise was accepted by the Commons, and on the 26th of July the Irish Church Bill received the Royal assent.

Thus passed this remarkable measure, which excited more angry controversy than any measure since the great Reform Bill of 1832. 'It was carried through its various stages in the face of a united and powerful Opposition, mainly by the resolute will and unflinching energy of the Prime Minister, who, throughout the long and arduous discussions, in which he took the leading part, displayed, in full measure, those qualities of acuteness, force of reasoning, and thorough mastery of his subject, for which he had long been conspicuous, but which were never more signally exhibited than on this occasion. Upon the whole, whatever may be thought of its merits or demerits, it can hardly be disputed that the Act for the Disestablishment of the Irish Church, introduced and carried into a law within somewhat less than five months, was the most remark-

able legislative achievement of modern times.'* The Government had manifestly every right to claim, as they did in the Queen's Speech at the close of the session, that this great measure might be remembered hereafter as a conclusive proof of the paramount anxiety of Parliament to pay reasonable regard, in legislating for each of the three kingdoms, to the special circumstances by which it might be distinguished, and to deal on principles of impartial justice with all interests and all portions of the nation.

Having settled the Irish Church grievance, however, Mr. Gladstone did not rest there. This was undoubtedly the great sentimental difficulty in the way of a reconciliation between the two peoples, but there was an equally important question behind—that of the land. Not even the Ministry which had disestablished the Irish Church could expect to retain office unless it went further in the direction of popular progress indicated by the sympathies of both divisions of the United Kingdom. Accordingly, at the opening of the session of 1870, and in the course of the debate on the Address, the Premier stated that the duty of the Government in regard to the condition of Ireland was absolutely paramount and primary. With regard to Fenianism, he believed it would receive its death-blow from the passing of good and just laws for removing the evils accompanying the tenure and cultivation of land in Ireland.

On the 15th of February the Irish Land Bill was

* *Annual Register*, 1869.

brought forward in a crowded House, the galleries being filled with distinguished strangers. In the outset, Mr. Gladstone alluded to the predictions of the opponents of the Irish Church Bill twelve months before, that it was the land and not the Church which lay at the root of Irish grievances. He therefore trusted that the Opposition would approach the question with a due sense of its importance. The necessity for closing and sealing up the controversy was admitted by all fair-minded and moderate men on both sides. Acknowledging the valuable assistance rendered by the recent literature on this great problem, he proceeded to dissipate some of the misapprehensions which prevailed as to the condition of Ireland, such as the notion that the Irish were a Celtic race, prone to disorder; that the land laws were the same in Ireland as in England, and ought therefore to produce the same results in both countries; that Ireland had been prospering for the last twenty years, and that the people had no occasion to exhibit feelings of discontent. On the contrary, with regard to this last item, the speaker demonstrated that the rate of wages had not risen within the last ten years, that the number of persons receiving poor relief had increased, the cost of subsistence had risen, and some of the most imprudent and violent interferences with the fixed usages of the country had occurred. Moreover, the course of legislation for the past fifty years, though intended in a beneficial spirit, had possibly been detrimental to the interests of the occupiers. The Act of 1793 giving the franchise to Roman

Catholics had induced the creation of 40s. freeholds, and the abolition of the franchise in 1829 vastly extended the mischief, and, perhaps, under the circumstances of Ireland, the still greater mischief of mere yearly tenancy. The Encumbered Estates Act, which had since passed into the Act for Dealing with the Sale of Landed Estates, by not protecting the improvements of the tenants, had operated as an extensive confiscation. Parliament also, during the previous half century, had completely changed the conditions of eviction against the tenants. Speaking broadly, Mr. Gladstone asserted that after we had been legislating for a century in favour of Ireland, it was a matter of doubt whether, as far as the law was concerned, the condition of the occupier was better than before the repeal of the Penal Laws. The present bill would reverse the presumption of law in favour of yearly tenancies, and would not leave owners and occupiers full freedom of contract.

The great evil to be dealt with was insecurity of tenure—as pointed out years before by the Devon Commission—which paralysed the occupier's industry, and vitiated his relations with his landlord, with the State, and with society at large. The Premier, having glanced at the various remedies which had been suggested, pronounced emphatically against perpetuity of tenure. He held that to convert the landlords into mere recipients of rent-charge, to divorce them from their responsibilities, and to relieve them of their duties would not be for the public good, would cramp the development of the agricultural resources of Ireland,

and must ultimately reproduce the evils now complained of. Insecurity of tenure manifested itself in four modes —in the withdrawal of privileges hitherto enjoyed by the tenant, in the lavish and pitiless use of notices to quit, in evictions, and in the raising of rents where the increased value of farms had been caused by the tenants' improvements. The remedy for these serious evils might be extracted from the experience of Ulster without any shock to the foundations of property. The rental of eight counties where stability or security of tenure prevailed was, in 1779, £990,000; in 1809 it was £2,830,000. The rest of Ireland, minus Ulster, had in 1779, according to Arthur Young, a rental of £5,000,000, and in 1869 that rental was £9,200,000. Further details were adduced, showing that while the rent of England and Scotland, where there was more security of tenure, had tripled and sextupled within the last ninety years, in Ireland it had only doubled; and while in Ulster it had tripled, in the other provinces it had not doubled. Coming to the provisions of the bill, Mr. Gladstone divided them under two heads, viz., the acquisition and the occupation of land. Touching the first, Ireland would come under the operation of the two bills to be introduced for facilitating the transfer of land and the distribution of the real estate of intestates, but all the provisions specially affecting Ireland were contained in the present bill. It proposed to increase the power of limited owners with regard to the sale and lease of land, and assistance would be given by treasury loans, through the Irish Board of Works, to tenants desiring

to purchase the cultivated lands they then occupied, either by private contract or through the machinery of the Landed Estates Court. This assistance would only be given as a rule to tenants purchasing their own holdings; but where a landlord would only sell in gross, and the tenants combined to buy four-fifths, assistance would be given to persons outside the estate to purchase the other fifth. Provision would be made for loans for the reclamation and purchase of waste lands, and for assisting landlords to pay compensation to tenants giving up their holdings of their own free will.

Dealing with the second division of the bill—that relating to the occupation of land—Mr. Gladstone explained the nature of the judicial machinery for carrying out the provisions of the measure. This would be of two kinds—either a court of arbitration or the civil bill court—from which latter there would be an appeal to the Judges of Assize; and under a clause described as 'the equities clause,' the courts would be able to take into consideration, not merely the legal aspects of each case, but all the circumstances bearing equitably upon it. There were four main provisions in the bill, corresponding to the four descriptions of Irish holdings, viz., those held under the Ulster custom, those held under analogous customs in other parts of the country not having the same traditionary authority, yearly tenancies which enjoyed no kind of protection from custom, and tenancies under lease. The bill would take the Ulster custom as it existed, and give it at once

the force of law, and it would legalise the other customs subject to the following restrictions:—that the tenant should only claim when disturbed by the act of his landlord, but that he should not benefit if evicted for non-payment of rent or for sub-letting; that all arrears of rent and damages might be pleaded as a set-off by the landlord, and that the custom might be barred by a lease for thirty-one years. For tenants at will, the bill established a scale of damages which the courts —subject to the same conditions as in tenancies under customs—would be able to award to evicted tenants, viz., in holdings under £10 a sum not exceeding seven years' rent; in holdings between £10 and £50 a sum not exceeding five years' rent; between £50 and £100 not exceeding three years' rent; and over £100 two years' rent. This scale, however, did not include compensation for reclamation of land and permanent buildings, which would be awarded separately. In holdings over £50 the landlord might exempt himself from this scale by giving a lease for thirty-one years, and in holdings over £100 the parties might contract themselves out of it. The Judges would be required in applying this scale to have regard to the injury done to the tenants by eviction and the improvements they had effected. Asking, amidst some laughter, 'What is an improvement?' Mr. Gladstone defined it in the first place as an addition to the letting value of the land; and secondly, it must be suitable to the nature of the holding. The bill would reverse the present presumption of law; it would presume all improvements to be the

property of the tenant, and it would be for the landlord to prove the contrary. Retrospective improvements would be included, but only so far back as twenty years, except in the case of permanent buildings and reclamation of lands; but no claim could be made by a tenant contrary to the terms of his lease. The courts would take into consideration the length of time the tenant had enjoyed the improvement; and no claim could be advanced for tenants' improvements made for a valuable consideration, or where the landlord had contracted to perform them, and had not failed in his engagement. As to the holdings under lease, any owner might exempt his lands from the custom, always excepting the Ulster custom, which would be legalised, and from the scale of damages, by giving to his tenants a lease for thirty-one years—provided that the lease were approved by the court, and gave the tenant at the close of it a right of compensation for manures, permanent buildings, and reclamation of land. In explaining several miscellaneous and subordinate, yet important provisions, Mr. Gladstone said that eviction for non-payment of rent would not, as a general rule, be deemed a disturbance by the landlord; but where it followed on inability to pay an excessive and flagrantly unjust rent, the court would be allowed to take that circumstance into consideration. In future, notices to quit would be for twelve months dating from the last sale day in the current year, and to make them a more expensive amusement, they must all bear a half-crown stamp. In every new tenancy over £4, the county cess

would be divided between owner and occupier, the occupier below that amount being relieved altogether.

In concluding his statement, Mr. Gladstone said the Government had toiled hard in the construction of their scheme, but they were far from believing it to be perfect; and they invited, in unreserved good faith, the co-operation of all parties and of all members of the House. They desired that the measure should become a great gift to Ireland, and put an end to the grievances and sufferings which had so long accompanied the tenure of land in that country. They had not knowingly proceeded in any spirit of partisanship; and as they had afforded the occupier improved security of tenure, so they had afforded the landlord improved security for his rent, and improved security for the better cultivation of his land. With regard to the Irish labourer, the only great boon—and it was a great boon—which it was in the power of the Legislature to give to him, was to increase the demand for his labour, and, by imparting a stimulus to the agriculture of the country, to insure its requiring more strong arms to carry it on, and thereby to bring more bidders into the market for those arms, and raise the natural and legitimate price of their labour. Though the general effect of the measure would be to impose the possibility of an immediate loss upon the landlord, he would not ultimately be a loser. He (the speaker) believed there was a huge fund of national wealth in the soil of Ireland as yet undeveloped; he trusted, in conclusion, that this

bill would be accepted by both landlord and tenant because it was just:—

'If I am asked what I hope to effect by this bill, I certainly hope we shall effect a great change in Ireland; but I hope also, and confidently believe, that this change will be accomplished by gentle means. Every line of the measure has been studied with the keenest desire that it shall import as little as possible of shock or violent alteration into any single arrangement now existing between landlord and tenant in Ireland. There is, no doubt, much to be undone; there is, no doubt, much to be improved; but what we desire is that the work of this bill should be like the work of Nature herself, when on the face of a desolated land she restores what has been laid waste by the wild and savage hand of man. Its operations, we believe, will be quiet and gradual. We wish to alarm none; we wish to injure no one. What we wish is that where there has been despondency there shall be hope; where there has been mistrust there shall be confidence; where there has been alienation and hate there shall, however gradually, be woven the ties of a strong attachment between man and man. This we know cannot be done in a day. The measure has reference to evils which have been long at work; their roots strike far back into bygone centuries; and it is against the ordinance of Providence, as it is against the interest of man, that immediate reparation should in such cases be possible; for one of the main restraints of misdoing would be removed, if the consequences of misdoing could in a moment receive a remedy. For such reparation and such effects it is that we look from this bill; and we reckon on them not less surely and not less confidently because we know they must be gradual and slow; and because we are likewise aware that if it be poisoned by the malignant agency of angry or of bitter passions, it cannot do its proper work. In order that there may be a hope of its entire success, it must be passed—not as a triumph of party over party, or class over class; not as the lifting up of an ensign to record the downfall of that which has once been great and powerful—but as a common work of common love and goodwill to the common good of our common country. With such objects and in such a spirit as that, this House will address itself to the work, and sustain the feeble efforts of the Government. And my hope, at least, is high and ardent that we shall live to see our work prosper in our hand, and that in that Ireland, which we desire to unite to England and Scotland by the only enduring ties—those of free-will and free affection—peace, order, and a settled and cheerful industry will diffuse their blessings from year to year, and from day to day, over a smiling land.'

Mr. Gladstone's proposals, while they ensured for

the tenant security of holding, confiscated not a single valuable right of the Irish landowner. The latter required to be taught the lesson that he would receive the largest amount of rent when he was most liberal in his arrangements with his tenantry. The bill was simple, and was founded on the belief that free contract lies 'at the root of every healthy condition of society.' The tenant was secured against oppression on the part of his landlord, and the landlord was secured legally against loss or detriment to his property.

The second reading was fixed for the 7th of March, and on that day a long debate began upon the principles and details of the measure. Dr. Ball, in a powerful speech, held that, as regarded Ulster tenant-right, the bill perpetuated and fixed a custom which varied with every estate, which was in itself an evil, making, as it were, a distinct law for every separate holding; as regarded compensation, it was fixed too high, the maximum amounting to one-third the fee-simple. He did not, however, object to the principle; but, as regarded future tenancies, he thought the bill utterly bad. Amongst succeeding speakers was Sir Roundell Palmer, who described the bill as large and important, but not revolutionary, yet, at the same time, 'a humiliating necessity.'

Mr. Disraeli glanced through the various objections taken to the measure, and then warmly attacked Mr. Horsman (who had spoken strongly in favour of the bill) as 'a superior person.' When Secretary to the Irish Lord-Lieutenant, Mr. Horsman had excused him-

self for not bringing in bills on the ground that his office was a complete sinecure; 'and we,' said Mr. Disraeli, 'knowing what a superior person he was, did not put an uncharitable construction on his conduct, but said, "This is a part of some profound policy, which will end in the regeneration of Ireland and in the consolidation of her Majesty's United Kingdom."' He (Mr. Disraeli) believed that, without giving any final or general opinion upon the merits of the bill, 'a more complicated, a more clumsy, or a more heterogeneous measure was never yet brought before the attention of Parliament.' After ridiculing the tribunals proposed by the scheme, his sketch of their difficulties being received with great laughter, Mr. Disraeli said, 'Do not let us vote upon this subject as if we had received threatening letters—as if we expected to meet Rory of the Hills when we go into the lobby. No; let us decide upon all those great subjects which will be brought under our consideration in committee as becomes members of the House of Commons.'

Mr. Gladstone had little to reply to besides invective in closing the debate. Upon all the leading principles of the measure he remained fixed in his opinion—nothing had been brought forward calculated to affect the Government positions. On the general question he observed, 'It is our desire to be just, but to be just we must be just to all. The oppression of a majority is detestable and odious—the oppression of a minority is only by one degree less detestable and less odious. The face of justice is like the face of the god Janus. It is

like the face of those lions, the work of Landseer, which keep watch and ward around the record of our country's greatness. She presents the tranquil and majestic countenance towards every point of the compass and every quarter of the globe. That rare, that noble, that imperial virtue has this above all other qualities, that she is no respecter of persons, and she will not take advantage of a favourable moment to oppress the wealthy for the sake of flattering the poor, any more than she will condescend to oppress the poor for the sake of pampering the luxuries of the rich.'

There was no intention on the part of the Opposition to divide against the second reading of the bill, but a division was forced by a few members with this extraordinary result—For the second reading, 442; against, 11. Mr. Disraeli and many of his influential supporters went into the lobby with Mr. Gladstone, and the eleven members who desired to record their opposition to this measure of pacification were the following :—Sir W. Bagge, Mr. Callan, Mr. D'Arcy, Mr. E. Dease, Mr. Digby, Sir J. Gray, the Right Hon. J. W. Henley, Mr. Heron, Mr. J. Lowther, Sir P. O'Brien, and Mr. Sherlock; tellers, Mr. Bryan and Col. White. Before the bill went into committee, Mr. Chichester Fortescue's measure for securing the safety of life and property in Ireland was rapidly pushed forward, in consequence of daring outrages which had occurred in county Mayo. The amendments to the Land Bill, of which notice was given, were no fewer than three hundred in number. Mr. Disraeli moved in committee that the compensation

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Besides the Irish Land Question, several prominent topics—one of a domestic, others of a foreign character—were discussed during this session. It had long been admitted (referring now to the former subject) that elementary education in this country was in an unsatisfactory condition, and on the 17th of February Mr. Forster introduced the Government bill providing for elementary education in England and Wales. This

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measure was based upon the principle of direct compulsion as regarded the attendance of children, and to effect this, power was to be given to each School Board to frame bye-laws compelling the attendance at school of all children from five to twelve years of age within their district. The Government having shown a decided agreement on some points with the members of the Opposition, Mr. Richard charged the Premier with having thrown the Nonconformists overboard. Mr. Forster became extremely unpopular for a time with the latter body, and he was described by Mr. Richard as 'mounting the good steed Conservative, and charging into the ranks of his friends and riding them down roughshod.' On the order for the third reading, Mr. Dixon and Mr. Miall, speaking on behalf of the Nonconformists, denounced the measure, and attacked the Government for having roused the suspicion and distrust of their own supporters, while they had secured the aid of the Opposition. Mr. Miall said that the Premier had led one section of the Liberal party through the Valley of Humiliation; but 'once bit, twice shy,' he continued, 'and we can't stand this sort of thing much longer.' Mr. Gladstone was roused by this speech, and a sharp passage of arms occurred. 'I hope,' said the Premier, replying to Mr. Miall, 'that my hon. friend will not continue his support to the Government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause he has at heart that he should do so. So long as my hon.

friend thinks fit to give us his support we will co-operate with my hon. friend for every purpose we have in common; but when we think his opinions and demands exacting, when we think he looks too much to the section of the community he adorns, and too little to the interests of the people at large, we must then recollect that we are the Government of the Queen, and that those who have assumed the high responsibility of administering the affairs of this Empire, must endeavour to forget the parts in the whole, and must, in the great measures they introduce into the House, propose to themselves no meaner or narrower object—no other object than the welfare of the Empire at large.' This second important measure of a memorable session eventually passed both Houses, and became law.

In April, the country was startled by the report of the seizure and massacre of a party of English travellers by Greek brigands. It seems that the party consisted of Lord and Lady Muncaster, Mr. F. G. Vyner, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lloyd and child, Mr. Edward Herbert, Secretary to the British Legation, and Count Albert de Boyl, Secretary to the Italian Legation, with their suites. Having visited Marathon, under the protection of an armed escort, they had reached Raphini on their return to Athens, when they were stopped and overpowered by a party of brigands. After rough usage, the ladies were released, and Lord Muncaster was also allowed to proceed to Athens for the purpose of securing the consent of the Greek Government to the terms of the release submitted

by the brigands. They demanded £50,000, which was afterwards reduced to £25,000, in money, a free pardon, and the release of certain brigands already in custody. The Greek Government, thinking little of the threats to murder the captives if these demands were not complied with, despatched a body of troops to liberate them by force. The British Minister at Athens endeavoured to procure the release of the captives, even on the terms demanded by the brigands. The amnesty was the greatest difficulty in the way. Seeing the active efforts which were being made, the brigands took their captives further into the interior, and in a few days murdered them in cold blood. Mr. Herbert and Count de Boyl were shot on the 21st, and Mr. Verner and Mr. Lloyd on the 22nd. It was stated that from the time of their capture until their melancholy death, the party sustained each other with cheerful resignation and true manliness. The brigands were pursued until the greater portion of them were shot or secured, preparatory to being sent to Athens for trial and execution. This terrible incident created a profound sensation in England. It was formally brought under the attention of the two Houses of Parliament, Sir Roundell Palmer being the mover in the Commons. There was a general impression that, from the outset, two parties had been playing their game of ambition with the lives of our countrymen.

Mr. Gladstone acknowledged the gravity of the situation, but pleaded the necessity for further information before taking decided steps. This grievous and

shocking tragedy, however, would tend to an opening-up of circumstances connected with the condition of Greece, such as former times had probably never afforded an adequate occasion of investigating. But he still cherished a desire that some other method would be discovered of accounting for these mischiefs than that of charging them upon the popular institutions of the country. In consequence of Turkish domination in Greece, it was the class called upon to govern in that country which was defective, far more than the class to be governed. The first duty of the English Government would be to ascertain the facts absolutely, and then comprehensively to consider the obligations which arose. In the House of Lords, the Earl of Carnarvon—whose cousin, Mr. Herbert, had been killed—demanded 'a full, clear, perfectly just trial of every single person, no matter what his rank or class, against whom there could be any fair suspicion of complicity with these foul murders.' Ultimately, several brigands were executed, and the band immediately implicated was nearly extirpated. The English Government did not see their way to more active interference, and before the close of the year, events of still greater magnitude than this diabolical outrage absorbed the public attention.

In July, 1870, broke out the war between France and Prussia, which resulted in the complete prostration of the former. Much of the responsibility for the conflict was due to the precipitation and the eagerness for war manifested by the French Emperor and the French people. England could not view such a contest without

apprehension, chiefly on the score of Belgium—whose proximity to both combatants rendered her an object of great solicitude. The English Government, however, speedily issued a proclamation of neutrality, a policy obviously dictated by the circumstances of the case. This policy was adhered to, but it laid us open to the unreasonable strictures of the German people. We had been successful, with the aid of others, in procuring the withdrawal of the nomination of the Prince of Hohenzollern to the Spanish Crown by Prussia; but diplomatic relations between that country and France were already greatly strained, and the alleged insults to M. Benedetti, at Ems, led to the hostile initiative being taken by France.

The declaration of war produced great excitement in England, and this excitement was intensified by the publication in the *Times* of a draft treaty between Count Bismarck and M. Benedetti, the French Minister at Berlin. This proposed compact between France and Prussia was regarded as a direct menace to England by the former Power—France looking forward to the acquisition of Belgium for herself. The publication of the treaty was due to Prince Bismarck, who hoped to procure thereby England and Belgium as German allies. Mr. Gladstone, in the House of Commons, admitted that the Government had been taken by surprise by this treaty, whose gravity had not, in the slightest degree, been over-estimated. He awaited, however, declarations from the French and Prussian Governments. France at first denied the authenticity of the document, but this she

afterwards admitted. The moment was an anxious one for England, but the Premier refrained from adopting a high-handed policy, although he asked Parliament for two millions of money and twenty thousand additional men—demands readily acceded to.

Immediately before the prorogation of Parliament, Mr. Disraeli pressed the Government to make known its intentions, and Mr. Gladstone's reply was criticised as unsatisfactory. He objected to the idea of 'armed neutrality,' as inconsistent with that 'unequivocal friendliness to both parties' which England was anxious to maintain. The Belgian difficulty received no exposition, but Mr. Gladstone concluded by saying that the country had adequate forces, and he believed that the Government would be able to maintain such a dignified and friendly position as should carry with it no suspicion, and would not, under the idea of securing safety, introduce new elements of danger and disturbance. England hoped, at some happy moment, to be, either alone or along with others, the chosen bearer of a message of peace. In the House of Lords, Earl Granville was more emphatic and explicit, declaring that England meant to be true and faithful to all her treaty engagements. A new and triple treaty was signed by England, Prussia, and France, recording their determination to maintain intact the independence and neutrality of Belgium, as provided in the Quintuple Treaty of 1839. This new engagement was to be binding for one year after the cessation of the Franco-Prussian war, and then the signitaries were to fall back

upon the Treaty of 1839. The general policy of the Government upon this important question was endorsed by the country, though complaints were made of the unnecessary reticence of the Prime Minister.

We cannot dismiss this important session of 1870 without a brief reference to certain legislative and other changes which were effected. By an Order in Council it was directed that from the 31st of August next ensuing all entrance appointments to situations in all Civil Departments of the State, except the Foreign Office and posts requiring professional knowledge, should be filled by open competition. The Royal prerogative which asserted that the General Commanding-in-Chief is the agent of the Crown was abolished, and that distinguished personage was formally declared to be a subordinate of the Minister of War. Some difficulty was anticipated in this matter, but her Majesty frankly and promptly surrendered her privileges, and all danger of a collision with Parliament was thereby averted. A new Foreign Enlistment Act was passed, which enabled the Government to prohibit the building as well as the escape of Alabamas, but compelled the Admiralty to release them on receipt of a bond to the effect that they were not to be employed for any illegal work. The disfranchisement of Bridgewater, Beverley, Sligo, and Cashel was decreed. An Act was passed removing the disabilities of clergymen who abandon the clerical profession; and an Act was also passed modifying the Law of Married Women's Property. Finally, the half-penny postage for newspapers

was instituted, while the half-penny card was also introduced.

The release of the Fenian prisoners was a matter which attracted considerable attention. Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, announcing the intention of the Government to release the Fenian prisoners then undergoing sentences for treason or treason-felony, on condition of their not remaining in, or returning to, the United Kingdom. The Premier, alluding to the enormity of their offences, said that the same principles of justice which dictated their sentences would amply sanction the prolongation of their imprisonment if the public security demanded it. 'It is this last question, therefore, which has formed the subject of careful examination by her Majesty's Government, and they have been able to come to the conclusion that, under the existing circumstances of the country, the release of the prisoners, guarded by the condition which I have stated, will be perfectly compatible with the paramount interests of public safety, and, being so, will tend to strengthen the cause of peace and loyalty in Ireland.' This decision on the part of the Government was very generally approved by the press and the country, though the condition placed upon the amnesty was variously viewed, being severely condemned by one section of the people, and regarded as a wise restriction by the great majority.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIBERALISM (*concluded*).

The Black Sea Treaty—Mr. Disraeli on Foreign Affairs—Reply of Mr. Gladstone—Debate on the Policy of the Government—Marriage Grant to the Princess Louise—Alarming Condition of Ireland—Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Government—The Army Regulation Bill—Abolition of Purchase—Mr. Cardwell's Scheme—Debated in the Commons—The Opposition defeated—The Bill rejected in the Lords—The Premier abolishes Purchase by Royal Warrant—The Step severely criticised—Vote of Censure in the Lords—Sir Roundell Palmer approves the Royal Warrant—The Ballot Bill—Rejected by the Lords—Other Questions discussed—Mr. Miall's Motion for the Disestablishment of the Church of England—Opposed by Mr. Gladstone, and rejected—Conclusion of the Treaty of Washington—Miscellaneous Questions—Mr. Lowe's Match Tax—Mr. Bruce's Licensing Bill, &c.—The Government and Epping Forest—Mr. Gladstone on his Religion—The Home Rule Agitation—Speech of the Premier—Waning Popularity of the Ministry—Mr. Gladstone's Address on Blackheath—A striking Scene—Defence of the Government Policy—The Constitution of the House of Lords—A new social Movement—The Future of England—Parliamentary History of the Year 1871—Legislative Achievements of the Gladstone Administration.

WHEN the session of 1871 opened, difficulties had already begun to gather round the Gladstone Government, though it was destined to accomplish other great reforms ere it fell before the treacherous wave of public opinion. The most important question discussed at an early period was that concerning the Black Sea Treaty. Taking advantage of the altered circumstances of Europe, the Emperor of Russia declined any longer to recognise the neutralisation of the Black Sea, and withdrew from the naval

convention, at the same time restoring to the Sultan the full exercise of his rights, and duly informing the other Powers concerned of his action. The Czar further declared that he had no wish to reopen the Eastern Question, that he adhered to the principles of the treaty as fixing the position of Turkey, and that he was ready to enter into any understanding to this effect with the other Powers. After much diplomatic negotiation, a conference of the Powers was held in London, when the neutralisation of the Black Sea was abrogated, and the Porte permitted to open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the vessels of war of friendly and allied Powers, in case the Government of the Sultan should think it necessary to do so in order to ensure the execution of the Treaty of 1856. The European Commission of the Danube was also prolonged for twelve years, and the works already made, or to be made, on that river neutralised, with, however, the reservation to the Porte of its right to send ships of war into the river.

In the debate on the Address, Mr. Disraeli reviewed the state of foreign affairs generally. He thought that England should have made more of the guarantee to Prussia of her Saxon provinces, given us by the Treaty of Vienna, and also, as regarded France, of the concession obtained from Prussia as to the Hohenzollern candidature. He was sarcastic at the expense of the Government upon our attenuated armaments, which rendered 'armed neutrality' on our part so difficult. After paying left-handed compliments to Mr. Childers,

Mr. Cardwell, and Mr. Lowe upon their economy, the right hon. gentleman ridiculed our proceedings in the matter of the Russian Note, and expressed his belief that there was a secret treaty between Germany and Russia. At the close of his amusing survey, while not prepared to propose an amendment, Mr. Disraeli said that he did not think the state of affairs to be devoid of peril, and all must admit the position to be critical. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, maintained that there was not a shadow of foundation for the accusations which had been made. The Ministry had no knowledge of the coming storm until it broke around them. With regard to the armaments of the country, they had been greatly increased in efficiency since the Conservatives went out of office in 1868; and the Premier rallied the leader of the Opposition on the close resemblance between his conception of a 'bloated armament' in 1861, and his conception of an 'attenuated armament' in 1871. As to the binding character of the guarantee of Prussia's Saxon provinces, given in 1815, Mr. Gladstone showed the fallacy of this from the exposition of the Government of which his opponent was a member, touching the character of a joint guarantee as exemplified in the Luxemburg guarantee of 1868. He further declared, respecting the Russian Note, that neither Lord Clarendon nor Lord Palmerston had ever believed that the neutralisation of the Black Sea could be more than temporary, assured the House that England would not have had a single ally among the neutral Powers if she had proposed simply to insist on

this neutralisation when the Russian Note appeared, Austria being entirely opposed to that course; and he denied that we had made any sort of special appeal for help to Germany, having merely notified our course to Germany as to other Powers. England had traditions and obligations which she would never abandon; but he hoped she would never be guilty of the folly of supposing that she could improve her condition in the face of Europe by setting up imaginary interests which she did not possess. He saw no special or near peril to England, whom he was desirous of making strong, but he admitted the possibility that the neutral Powers might find it necessary to express an opinion upon the terms of peace.

Some days later, Mr. Disraeli again returned to the subject of the Black Sea Treaty, and strongly condemned the assembling of a conference merely to register the humiliation of Great Britain. Mr. Gladstone replied with some warmth to the taunt that there was a foregone conclusion in his mind, when the conference met, fatal to the honour of the country. He had never denied that the neutralisation of the Black Sea was a vital part of the Paris Treaty, but only that it was exclusively vital. He acknowledged his error as to Lord Clarendon's view of the neutralisation condition, but he still believed that Lord Palmerston, while attaching great importance to it, did not think it was one which could be permanently enforced. With regard to Mr. Disraeli's condemnation of the Government policy, Mr. Gladstone said that, with one great

quarrel and controversy raging in Europe, the right hon. gentleman would have recommended them to keep open another, and not to take any means to arrive at an amicable solution of the question. Such was the policy which his wisdom and resources suggested to him. But the Government had been desirous to keep together, if possible, in harmony and co-operation, the neutral influences in Europe, in the hope that in some happy moment they might be able to contract that range of misery and destruction which they had long seen extending.

Another debate shortly afterwards took place upon our foreign relations, on a motion by Mr. Auberon Herbert, 'That this House is of opinion that it is the duty of her Majesty's Government to act in concert with other neutral Powers to obtain moderate terms of peace, and to withhold all acquiescence in terms which might impair the independence of France, or threaten the future tranquillity of Europe.' Sir Robert Peel vigorously assailed the policy of the Government. It was one in which 'we ventured' to do this, and 'we ventured' to do that all through—language which he respectfully submitted to the House was not of the kind which Lord Palmerston would have used. It was unworthy of a great and powerful nation. Mr. Gladstone denied that the attitude of the Government had been one of selfish isolation. To inquiries as to the possibility of concerted action with Russia, an answer was received that it was impossible. Owing to the untoward reception of this overture and the appear-

ance of the Russian Note, Lord Granville could not further develope the idea of mediation. He (Mr. Gladstone) admitted that an extorted peace was one of the alternatives we had to fear, and that the greater magnanimity shown by the victor the better would it be, not only for France and Europe, but for the interests of Germany. Neither of the belligerents desired intervention; on the contrary, they rather thought the premature offer of our good offices might be prejudicial. 'England had no cause to be discontented with her position in Europe; but he warned the House not to set too high a value on the sole influence of England, for the strength of neutrals' action was that they should be all represented. He reiterated his statement that the conditions of peace were a matter of watchful concern to the neutrals, and added that it would be a noble addition to the great deeds of this country, if it should be able to mitigate the necessarily severe conditions of peace so as to make them conducive to a permanent settlement.' Expressing himself satisfied with Mr. Gladstone's statement respecting the position of England, Mr. Herbert withdrew his motion.

Before dealing with the great question of the session —the Abolition of Purchase in the Army—several other topics of interest claim attention. The proposed grant to the Princess Louise on her marriage roused the opposition of some members of the House, who affirmed that they represented the sentiments of a considerable number of the people. In view of this opposition, Mr. Gladstone's speech on moving the grant was fuller and

more argumentative than had usually been the case on such occasions. The resolution provided an annuity of £6,000 to her Royal Highness, and a grant of £30,000. The Premier stated that the Queen, in marrying her daughter to one of her own subjects, had followed her womanly and motherly instincts, and she had been supported by the advice of her responsible Ministers. Having defended the moderate nature of the provision, and passed a high eulogium upon the economical management of the Royal household, Mr. Gladstone affirmed that the Civil List, when settled at the commencement of her Majesty's reign, did not contemplate provisions of this nature, nor was it convenient that it should. Although the Crown Lands now produced an income only about equal to the Civil List, if they were managed in the same manner as a private estate, they would put the Sovereign in possession of the largest income in the country. But there was a still higher ground than this why the proposition should be supported, viz., the political importance which attached to supporting the dignity of the Crown in a becoming manner. The speaker also dwelt upon the value of a stable dynasty, and on the unwisdom of making pecuniary calculations of a minute nature upon such occasions. When the resolution for the marriage portion came to be reported, it was opposed by Mr. P. A. Taylor, supported by Mr. Disraeli, and carried by the singular majority of 350 votes against 1.

The condition of affairs in Ireland, and especially the spread of an agrarian conspiracy in Westmeath,

compelled the Government to move for a committee to inquire into the unlawful combination and confederacy existing in Westmeath and adjoining parts of Meath and King's County. Lord Hartington, Chief Secretary for Ireland, in moving for the committee, admitted that it was with feelings of painful dismay that he did so, but he proceeded to explain that the lawless condition of things indicated in a certain quarter was no criterion of the general condition of Ireland. Crime had subsided in the country, and the constabulary reports exhibited a marked improvement. Westmeath and the parts immediately adjacent, however, formed a terrible exception to the general rule, and the state of things having become intolerable, a committee was required th secure a thorough investigation of the case, and to satisfy the House that when the Government asked for any further powers their demand was justified by necessity. Mr. Disraeli was severely sarcastic at the expense of the Government, which had expressed its dismay at Ribandism. Referring to past legislation for Ireland, he observed that the Chief Secretary should have come forward and said, 'It is true that murder is perpetrated with impunity; it is true that life is not secure, and that property has no enjoyment and scarcely any existence; but this is nothing when in the enjoyment of abstract political justice—and by the labours of two years we have achieved that for Ireland; massacres, incendiarism, and assassinations are things scarcely to be noticed by a Minister, and are rather to be referred to the inquiry of a committee.' The right

hon. gentleman added that the people of England, being persuaded with regard to Irish politics that Mr. Gladstone was in possession of the philosopher's stone, had returned him to the House with an immense majority, with the express object of securing the tranquillity and content of Ireland. Neither time, labour, nor devotion had been begrudged him; 'under his influence, and at his instance, we have legalised confiscation, consecrated sacrilege, and condoned high treason; we have destroyed churches, we have shaken property to its foundation, and we have emptied gaols; and now he cannot govern the country without coming to a Parliamentary committee!' The right hon. gentleman, after all his heroic exploits, and at the head of his great majority, is making Government ridiculous.' Mr. Hardy also bitterly denounced the policy of the Government.

Mr. Gladstone, having administered a rebuke to Mr. Hardy for his heated language in describing murder as 'stalking abroad,' and the Government as 'becoming contemptible,' announced that the Ministry could not, consistently with their sense of public duty, withdraw the motion for a committee. He was glad that Mr. Disraeli, who had formerly told the House deliberately from his place that the consequences of disestablishment would be more formidable and destructive than those of foreign conquest, had now got down to expressions so moderate and judicial as that the Government had 'legalised confiscation and consecrated sacrilege.' Ministers asked the House to assist them in the eluci-

dation and establishment of facts, but the committee was also necessary from the fact that they desired to prove not only acts that were done but acts that were not done, and to show how the system of terrorism was applied to all the transactions of private life. Much valuable information could be obtained, but only on the condition that those giving it were protected against its publicity. Turning upon Mr. Disraeli, the Premier made an effective point by remarking upon his rival's admission that in the year 1852 he did not adopt the means which he believed most suitable for the protection of life and property in three counties of Ireland, because the Government was weak. 'If the defences of the Government are weak, and the number of troops insufficient, is a Government to make it an apology for departing from the first principles of duty that they sit upon this bench, that they want to sit upon this bench, and therefore cannot propose measures which, in their opinion, principle justifies, and the safety of the country demands?' Mr. Gladstone concluded by observing that, acting upon the immediate elementary obligations of a Government, at all hazards to secure personal peace and freedom in the transactions of life, they submitted their proposal to the House, and were confident it would receive the approval of its reflective and deliberate judgment.

During the debate, Mr. Osborne, in a humorous speech, described the Cabinet as consisting chiefly of 'Whig marionettes.' Alluding to the changes which had taken place in its composition, he said the Cabinet

had been lately whitewashed—that is, its members had been shuffled, and they had come back in the old military position of 'As you were.' In his principle of selection, the First Minister, if he had a choice, was in favour of Whig marionettes of the most approved pattern, while he himself held the official wire. He could not help thinking, when he looked through the long and dreary list of gentlemen who bowed to the presiding genius, there was written over the doors of the Cabinet, 'No Irish need apply.' The Solicitor-General for Ireland replied to this speech in a similar vein. Alluding to Mr. Osborne's complaint that the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant had been transferred to the treadmill of the Board of Trade, he observed, 'I apprehend that the hon. gentleman would be very glad to work upon that treadmill himself, and I take the liberty of saying confidentially that in less than eighteen months he would not only become a silent but a grateful member of the Government.' With regard to Mr. Osborne's feeling of satisfaction that he had an Irish seat in the House, Mr. Dowse said, 'The hon. member is an Irishman *pro re nata;* he is an Irishman for the present, and will continue one—until the next general election. Having said so much for the hon. member, I promise him, if he gives me another opportunity, to be more liberal in my acknowledgments of his efforts for throwing light on the subject of debate.' The Solicitor-General concluded by adducing arguments in support of the policy of the Government. At the close of the debate, the motion for a select committee

was carried by a large majority. The appointment of this committee was fully justified by subsequent events.

We now come to the Army Regulation Bill of the Government, which was introduced by Mr. Cardwell. The country having pronounced in favour of the abolition of the purchase system, this was the chief feature of the measure introduced by the Secretary at War. In moving the usual army estimates, the Minister explained the nature of the new scheme of army re-organisation. He stated that the Government, agreeing with Lord Derby that it would be cheapest to pay for our military labour, would not recommend compulsory service, but there would be clauses in the bill enabling the Government to raise any number of men upon necessity. After considering the various methods as to how our forces were to be raised, the Ministry had decided to propose the abolition of the purchase system. The necessity of accepting a system of retirement and promotion by selection as distinguished by seniority followed this decision, as well as the payment of a large sum of money by way of compensation, which he calculated would range from £7,400,000 to £8,400,000. The bill fixed a day after which no pecuniary interest would be taken by anyone in any new commission; but no officer would be the worse in a pecuniary sense by the abolition of purchase. A commission would be appointed to ascertain the over-regulation price in every regiment, and with money from the Consolidated Fund would stand in the place of a purchaser to the officer who wished to sell out, to retire on half-pay, &c. The

number allowed to retire each year would be limited to the average of the last five years. As to first commissions, they would be given without purchase to the general public by competitive examination, to subalterns of militia regiments after two years' good service, and, as before, to non-commissioned officers. These were the leading features of a measure whose minor details were explained with great minuteness by Mr. Cardwell.

It was not to be expected that so great a change in the constitution of the army could be effected without opposition. Accordingly, on the motion for the second reading of the bill, Col. Loyd-Lindsay proposed a resolution declaring that the expenditure necessary for the national defences did not at present justify any vote of public money for the extinction of purchase. The resolution was influentially supported, and many arguments were adduced in favour of the retention of the existing system. During the debate Sir J. Pakington severely criticised the measure, which he described as 'a costly party project and a sop to democracy,' and attacked Mr. Trevelyan for circulating 'trash,' which by dint of continual repetition had come to be believed. Mr. Trevelyan, who had, perhaps, done more than any other man to 'educate' his country upon this question, replied with spirit, and quoted the case of Havelock, who declared that he was sick for years in waiting for his promotion; 'that three sots and two fools had purchased over him, and that if he had no family to support he would not serve another hour.' The hon.

member for the Border Burghs warned the Opposition that if the defeat of the bill brought on a dissolution, 'Abolition of Purchase' would be an excellent hustings' cry. Mr. Disraeli was in favour of moulding the bill in committee, and urged Col. Loyd-Lindsay to withdraw his motion. Mr. Gladstone, however, announced that Government would insist upon the amendment being negatived. The speech of Mr. Disraeli he regarded as a landmark in the history of this question, as it admitted that this was the first proposition which had ever attempted to weld into one harmonious whole the three great arms intended for the defence of the country. The bill contained so much of the programme of the Government as needed legislation. Its product would answer to the standard of our requirements, which demanded a small army highly trained, and a large army of reserve ready at any moment. With regard to the reserves, they should not be drawn from the militia, but should consist of seasoned men, regularly trained, corresponding to the German Landwehr. He hoped that Mr. Disraeli's declaration against purchase would have its full weight, and he proceeded to justify Mr. Cardwell's decision to sweep away the whole system by paying off over-regulation as well as regulation prices. He opposed the idea of an increase of pay when purchase was abolished, a cry which had no reason on its side. The best security for the emoluments of the officers, and for a fair system of retirement, was the necessity on the part of the country of attracting the best men into its army.

Dealing with the idea that, after purchase had been abolished, almost everything would remain as it was, Mr. Gladstone said that if the purchase system was to be abolished at this great cost—he would almost call it this vast cost—the reason why it was to be abolished was that the whole position of the officers of the army might be fully and freely considered, and might be subjected to review in all respects where it should seem susceptible of improvement. The idea was to have the very best men and the very best officers; but they were not to go into the army by compulsion, they were to go into it by free choice. The Government would go into committee expecting, even inviting, criticism, and would look for a spirit of co-operation in all those who were desirous of adjusting the clauses of the bill. They had an object of the highest and purest patriotism, viz., to secure that in the future, if possible even more than in the past, the British army should be and remain worthy of the British nation.

The amendment was negatived, and the bill read a second time. On going into committee, Mr. Mundella moved a resolution to the effect that 'This House, whilst approving the abolition of purchase in the army, is of opinion that the army may be put in a state of efficiency without increasing the ordinary military estimates of last year.' He asked why they should not have more organisation, instead of the cry of more men and more money. When the American war was at its worst, and everybody was crying out for 'more men,' the poet Lowell wrote:—

'More men! More men—that's where we fail,
Weak things grow weaker yet by lengthening;
What is the use of adding to the tail,
When it's the head's in want of strengthening?'

The motion was seconded by Mr. Pease, who inveighed strongly against the increase of army expenditure, and appealed to the Prime Minister to reconsider the retrograde step he was now taking; it was unsound, economically; politically, an error. It was also an immoral proceeding, internationally, for this country to set the example of a large military expenditure. Mr. Gladstone said he understood the motion to mean that between £2,750,000 and £3,000,000 ought to be taken off the estimates before the House, and that this might be done without impairing the efficiency of the army. He was not prepared to accede to that proposition. The speeches of the two hon. members were rather in favour of retrenchment generally, than in support of the particular motion before the House. Now, after allowing for the increase which had arisen this year in the military expenditure, the total defensive expenditure for the year would exhibit a sum to the credit of the Government estimates of between £600,000 and £800,000. At the same time he would not have it supposed that the prolonged scale of military expenditure, which the circumstances and exigencies of the time required, would become the normal measure of the military expenditure of the country. After going through the various charges, Mr. Gladstone said that his hon. friends need not apprehend for a moment that

the Government were more disposed than they had heretofore shown themselves to encourage unnecessary alarm, that they were less sensible of the duty and the value of endeavouring to retrench public expenditure, or that they were less disposed, and, so far as depended upon them, less determined to apply that principle, according to the varying exigencies of the time, with a firm and steady hand during the period, whether it were long or short, that they might have the honour to administer the affairs of the country. In the end, Mr. Mundella's motion was defeated by 294 to 91.

There still remained before the Government the great task of abolishing Purchase in the Army. Their labours were facilitated by a recent report of a Royal commission, to the effect that the practice of bargaining for commissions was inseparable from the permission to buy them; but there was one great obstacle to the proposed abolition in the fact that an expenditure of several millions would be immediately necessary. This part of the Government scheme was warmly opposed by the military members of the House, and an amendment against it was moved by Colonel Loyd-Lindsay. That officer, however, withdrew his motion at the request of Mr. Disraeli; but the clauses of the bill continued to be discussed with great persistency and at undue length. After several months had elapsed, leaving little prospect of the bill being passed in its entirety, the Government were driven to state that they would only insist on the purchase clauses, and the transfer of power over the Militia and Volunteers from the Lords-

Lieutenant to the Crown. Mr. Disraeli sharply criticised the policy of the Government, stating that he had only approved the abolition of purchase as a means towards the reorganisation of the army, which had now been abandoned. Mr. Gladstone replied that the abolition of purchase had always been the chief feature of the Government scheme, and that they must and would clear the ground for re-organisation by abolishing it, as well as the privilege of the Lords-Lieutenant. The bill accordingly passed through committee. Besides securing the leading points just indicated, it restored to the State the government of the army, enabled Parliament to fix from year to year the number of the militia, authorised Government to insist on six months' continuous training as the condition of entering that force, and rendered volunteers when under training in the camps subject to the Mutiny Act.

Much speculation arose upon the probable reception of the measure by the House of Lords, and at a meeting of Conservative peers held at the Carlton Club—attended only by a section of the party, however—it was resolved to oppose the bill. On its being brought forward, the Duke of Richmond moved that the House should not pass the second reading until it had before it a comprehensive plan. Lord Sandhurst defended the bill, but the great majority of the speeches delivered were antagonistic to it. Lord Salisbury said it was the duty of the House to protect the country against rash and imperfect legislation, and he exhorted their lordships not to abandon the army to the influence of

combined senility and corruption. The bill was urged forward by the Prime Minister to redeem the barrenness of a useless session. Lord Granville besought the House to pause ere it placed itself in collision with the Commons. Eventually the bill was rejected by 155 to 130; but as regarded actual peers of the realm the Government had a majority of one. The measure was defeated by the Scotch and Irish representative peers, 29 of whom voted or paired with the Opposition, and only 3 for the Government.

This decision was distasteful to the country, and it was generally felt that the question could not be suffered thus to remain shelved. It was reserved, however, for the Prime Minister to discover a way out of the difficulty which was as extraordinary and unexpected as it was effectual. On the 20th of July, in answering a question addressed to him by Sir George Grey, Mr. Gladstone announced that the Government had resolved to advise her Majesty to take the decisive step of cancelling the Royal warrant under which purchase was legal. That advice was accepted by her Majesty, and a new warrant had been framed in terms conformable with the law. It was consequently his duty, on the part of the Government, to state that, after the 1st of November ensuing, purchase in the army would no longer exist. When the cheers which followed this announcement had subsided, Mr. Gladstone went on to say that, under the altered circumstances of the case, it was not for them to indicate what course the House of Lords should pursue. In considering this matter, the Government

had had no other object in view but simplicity, despatch, the observance of constitutional usage, and the speedy termination of a state of suspense which they thought most injurious—he would not say dangerous—to the army, and calculated to delay the progress of a measure that was likely, in their judgment, to do full justice to the fair pecuniary claims of the officers, and the loss of which might make it difficult to find means of doing justice to those claims. It would not be becoming or appropriate to forecast what course Ministers should take in case they were to fail in prosecuting the bill to its legitimate conclusion. But one thing it was his duty to state on the part of the Government, viz., that they would use the best means in their power, mindful of the honourable pledges they had given, to secure at the hands of Parliament just and liberal terms for the officers of the army.

Mr. Disraeli described this exercise of prerogative as a very high-handed course—he would not say then illegal course, as he reserved that point for future consideration. He was checked by the Speaker for denouncing the Ministerial policy as 'part of an avowed and a shameful conspiracy against the undoubted privileges of the other House of Parliament.' Having withdrawn these words, he went on to maintain that no Minister acted in a wise manner who, on finding himself baffled in passing a measure which he believed to be of importance, came forward and told the House that he would defy the opinion of Parliament, and who appealed to the prerogative of the Crown

to assist him in the difficulties which he had himself created.

When the Royal warrant came on for discussion in the Lords, the Duke of Richmond moved to add the following words:—'That this House, in assenting to the second reading of this bill, desires to express its opinion that the interposition of the Executive during the progress of a measure submitted to Parliament by her Majesty's Government, in order to attain by the exercise of the prerogative, and without the aid of Parliament, the principal object included in that measure, is calculated to depreciate and neutralise the independent action of the Legislature, and is strongly to be condemned: and this House assents to the second reading of this bill only in order to secure the officers of her Majesty's army compensation to which they are entitled, consequent on the abolition of purchase in the army.' Lord Salisbury delivered another bitter speech, and said that although Lord Granville had been made the most reluctant instrument of insulting the order to which he belonged, their lordships knew the dictator under whom he served. The noble marquis asked whether it was worth while to retain their power by uniformly acting against their convictions. Lord Romilly stated that he joined with considerable pain the Opposition peers upon this question; but the Duke of Somerset (who had frequently opposed the measures of the Government) said that purchase must go, and no other course than that which they had adopted was really open to the Ministry. After speeches

from Lord Russell, Lord Cairns, and the Lord Chancellor, the vote of censure was carried by a majority of 80. The bill itself passed without a division. When the measure came to be discussed in the Commons, after its return from the Lords, there was a wide difference of opinion upon the legal aspects of the question between Sir R. Collier, the Attorney-General, and Sir J. D. Coleridge, the Solicitor-General. This divergence caused Mr. Harcourt to ask, amidst laughter from both sides of the House, which horse the Government intended to win with—the Attorney-General on 'Statute,' or the Solicitor-General on 'Prerogative'? Mr. Harcourt nevertheless cordially supported the issue of the warrant; it was the statute, he held, not the Royal warrant, which would make purchase illegal. Mr. Fawcett spoke strongly against the resort to prerogative, and said that if this act had been done by a Tory Ministry, it would have been passionately denounced by Mr. Gladstone, amid the applause of the whole Liberal party. The Premier, in defending his policy, said that to have proceeded by warrant in the outset would have assumed that the House of Commons of its own authority could compensate persons who had habitually broken the law. As to the argument that the consideration for which the House had agreed to pay a large sum of money had disappeared from the bill, and that purchase might be revived as it had been abolished, the Lords were responsible for this, and he was content to trust to the vigilance of the House of Commons to prevent any such act. With regard to

the question whether he had advised the Crown to issue the warrant on statute or by prerogative, Mr. Gladstone replied that he had advised her Majesty that she was in possession of a legal power, and that an adequate necessity existed for exercising it. Although there were precedents for it, he did not deny that it was a grave proceeding; but the great justification for it was the impossibility of otherwise putting a stop to the flagrant and crying evil of over-regulation prices. As to the censure of the House of Lords, while he did not undervalue it, he appealed to the public opinion of the country for his exculpation.

The absence of Sir Roundell Palmer from these debates having been frequently commented upon, on the last day of the session a letter was read from that eminent Liberal lawyer approving of the issue of the Royal warrant. Such a warrant was within the undoubted power of the Crown; and after recapitulating the existing circumstances, Sir Roundell Palmer said he thought the issue of the warrant was the least objectionable course which the Government could pursue. The measure passed; and greatly diversified as were the opinions of the people upon the method by which the abolition of purchase was secured, all were agreed in a short time as to the substantial wisdom of the Act itself.

Another measure which was discussed this session with great asperity was the Ballot Bill. A considerable section of the Conservative party resolved to obstruct the passage of the measure with every available weapon in their

power. Mr. Gladstone, who supported the bill, said it must and should pass the Commons before the session was concluded; and the Opposition, in order to defeat his purpose, delivered portentous speeches against the measure, whose relevancy it was sometimes impossible to discover. For nearly six weeks this warfare continued, but at length the bill was carried, though a skeleton only of the original scheme. In the Lords the bill met with scant courtesy, being rejected by 97 votes to 48. Many Liberal peers stayed away, and others voted against the measure on the ground of the late period of the session. A second question of importance, that of University Tests, was settled during the session. Mr. Gladstone introduced a bill substantially the same as that which the Lords had rejected the previous year. On the question again being remitted to the Upper House, Lord Salisbury carried an amendment of a religious nature striking at the root of the bill. This was disagreed with by the Commons, and ultimately the Lords themselves disavowed it by 128 to 89, and the bill, as it finally left the Commons, was agreed to, and received the Royal assent. The result of this measure was that all lay students of whatever religious creeds were in future to be admitted to the Universities on equal terms.

On two other important questions Mr. Gladstone was heard this session, and his utterances attracted great attention. Mr. Jacob Bright's bill for conceding the Parliamentary franchise to female householders, if single women, was rejected by 220 to 151; but the Premier

caused considerable sensation by admitting that, if the ballot were once established, women might be admitted to the franchise without detriment. A long debate also took place upon Mr. Miall's motion, 'That it is expedient, at the earliest practicable period, to apply the policy initiated by the disestablishment of the Irish Church to the other churches established by law in the United Kingdom.' Mr. Disraeli, in the course of the debate, expressed his confident belief that the great majority, both in the House and in the country, was decidedly in favour of the Church. The Nonconformists had, for the moment, allied themselves with the revolutionary philosophers, but their principles were opposed to the real feeling of the country, and he believed that even now a *plébiscite* would be in favour of the Church. He should oppose the motion in the interests of civil and religious liberty, and more for the sake of the State than of the Church. Mr. Gladstone announced emphatically that the Government were hostile to the motion, and did not at all profess to limit their opposition to the present occasion. The Church of England was not a foreign church; it was the growth of the history and traditions of the country. The disestablishment of the Irish Church had been one of the largest tasks to which a Legislature could address itself. 'But,' added the Premier, 'the question of the Irish Church sinks into insignificance—I mean material insignificance—beside the question of the English Church. It is not the number of its members or the millions of its revenue; it is the mode in which it has been from a

period shortly after the Christian era, and has never for 1,300 years ceased to be, the Church of the country, having been at every period ingrained with the hearts and the feelings of the great mass of the people, and having intertwined itself with the local habits and feelings, so that I do not believe there lives the man who could either divine the amount and character of the work my hon. friend would have to undertake were he doomed to be responsible for the execution of his own propositions, or who could in the least degree define or anticipate the consequences by which it would be attended.' If Mr. Miall sought to convert the majority of the House of Commons to his opinions, he must begin, concluded the right hon. gentleman, by undertaking the preliminary work of converting to those opinions the majority of the people of England. The motion was rejected by 374 votes to 89.

A threatened rupture between Great Britain and the United States was averted by the conclusion of the Treaty of Washington in the month of May. The British Commissioners were Lord de Grey (afterwards created Marquis of Ripon for his services), Sir Stafford Northcote, Professor Bernard, Sir Edward Thornton, and Sir John Macdonald. After having sat thirty-seven times, the High Joint Commissioners at New York signed a treaty providing for the establishment of two boards of arbitration—one to consider the *Alabama* and similar claims, which would be recognised as national, and settled on the principle of responsibility for depredations where Government had not exercised the utmost

possible diligence and precaution to prevent the fitting-out of privateers; the other would consider miscellaneous claims on both sides, confined principally to those arising out of the Civil War. No claims arising out of the Fenian invasion of Canada would be admitted. All legitimate cotton claims would be considered, except those of British subjects domiciled in the South. The San Juan boundary question, it was ultimately arranged, should be arbitrated upon by the Emperor of Germany. American vessels were to navigate the St. Lawrence free, and the Canadian canals on payment of the regular tolls. The treaty was ratified towards the close of May.

On miscellaneous questions the Government were responsible for various failures, and they likewise sustained several severe checks. Conspicuous amongst the former was the budget introduced by Mr. Lowe on the 20th of April. In consequence of the abolition of purchase, the army estimates were much swollen, and there was a great excess of estimated expenditure over revenue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to make up this deficiency in various ways, and amongst his propositions was a tax on matches, bearing the box label '*Ex luce lucellum*,' from which he expected £550,000. The match-tax speedily became one of the most unpopular taxes ever proposed; it was the butt of the comic and the *bête noire* of the serious papers, and was condemned by the country generally. The trade rose in arms against it, and it was shown that the proposed duty would vary from 100 to 400 per cent., even

more on the wholesale price. Thus the duty upon £625 worth of the commonest matches would be £3,000. The match trade would be virtually extinguished by such an imposition. Unable to withstand the dissatisfaction created by his proposal, Mr. Lowe abandoned the tax. Several other propositions in the budget were either modified or withdrawn, and an increased income-tax was imposed. Mr. Bruce's Licensing Bill also excited great opposition. Its two broad principles, as defined by its author, were that the public had a right to a sufficient number of respectably conducted houses; and that all vested interests should be carefully considered. There were certain restrictive clauses, however, in the measure which led to hostile demonstrations on the part of the trade, and in the end Mr. Bruce abandoned the chief features of his scheme, and declined to pledge himself to reintroduce the bill in the following session. Mr. Goschen introduced two bills on the subject of local taxation, designed to provide a uniform system of local government throughout England and Wales (the metropolis excepted), and to secure uniformity of rating. The bills did not come to a second reading. The Government further suffered a defeat on a matter of the greatest interest and importance to the poorer classes of London. Having proposed a commission to settle the rights of the Crown with regard to Epping Forest, Mr. Cowper-Temple brought forward a motion virtually against the Ministry, as it proposed to secure the preservation of the unenclosed portions of the forest as an open space for the enjoyment of the people of the

metropolis. The resolution was opposed by Mr. Gladstone, who stated that the Government had secured one thousand acres of the forest as a recreation ground for the people. Mr. Cowper-Temple's motion, notwithstanding, was carried by a large majority. The loss of the 'Captain' and the 'Megæra' led to grave reflections upon alleged Admiralty mismanagement, but Mr. Goschen, who succeeded Mr. Childers as First Lord, elaborately defended the conduct of the Board. The session, which, in spite of its failures, had been far from barren, terminated on the 21st of August.

During the following recess, Mr. Gladstone's energy was as sleepless as ever. In addition to various public appearances which he made, he was once more called upon to defend himself on the score of his religion. The affection with which he was viewed by a large section of the community seemed to be counterbalanced by the animosity of a smaller if more active section. Writing from Balmoral to Mr. Whalley, in answer to a question which the hon. member for Peterborough had put on behalf of his constituents, the Premier said, 'I quite agree with those of your constituents on whose behalf you address me, in thinking that the question "whether the Prime Minister of this country is a member of the Church of Rome," and being such, not only declines to avow it, but gives through a long life all the external signs of belonging to a different communion, is a "question of great political importance," and this not only "in the present," but in any possible condition of the "Liberal" or any other "party." For

it involves the question whether he is the basest creature in the kingdom, which he has a share in ruling; and instant ejectment from his office would be the smallest of the punishments he would deserve. If I have said this much upon the present subject, it has been out of personal respect to you. For I am entirely convinced that, while the question you have put to me is in truth an insulting one, you have put it only from having failed to notice its true character; since I have observed, during my experience of many years, that, even when you undertake the most startling duties, you perform them in "the gentlest and most considerate manner."' This last sentence was worthy of the Premier's rival in his best mood. The hon. member for Peterborough was generally condemned for acting as the mouthpiece of an insufferable inquisition into Mr. Gladstone's religious opinions.

The cry for Home Rule, and the unwarrantable conduct of Irish juries in connection with certain trials for agrarian crime, considerably disturbed the equanimity of the country during the recess. The Prime Minister, however, delivered a speech in connection with these matters which greatly allayed the public excitement. In receiving the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen, he took occasion to say that he did not quite know what was meant by the cry of Home Rule. He was glad to know emphatically that it did not mean the breaking up into fragments of the United Kingdom. He—and he hoped all those who heard him—intended that it should remain a United Kingdom. From

circumstances which he adduced, the Irish people were liable to become more or less the victims from time to time of this or that political delusion. 'But,' he continued, 'there is nothing that Ireland has asked and which this country and this Parliament have refused. This Parliament has done for Ireland what it would have scrupled to do for England and for Scotland. There remains now a single grievance—a grievance with regard to university education, which is not so entirely free in Ireland as it has now been made in England; but that is an exceptional subject, and it is a subject on which I am bound to say Ireland has made no united demand upon England; still, I regard it as a subject that calls for legislation, but there is no demand which Ireland has made and which England has refused, and I shall be very glad to see such a demand put into a practical shape, in which we may make it the subject of rational and candid discussion.' There were no inequalities between England and Ireland, the right hon. gentleman maintained, except such as were in favour of the latter. He admitted, nevertheless, that the circumstances under which Ireland was too long governed were hostile, nay, almost fatal to her growth. They ought rather to be pleased with what she had done than to complain of her. But if the doctrines of Home Rule were to be established in Ireland, they would be equally entitled to it in Scotland, and still more so in Wales, where the people spoke hardly anything but their own Celtic tongue. 'Can any sensible

man, can any rational man suppose that at this time of day, in this condition of the world, we are going to disintegrate the great capital institutions of this country, for the purpose of making ourselves ridiculous in the sight of all mankind, and crippling any power we possess for bestowing benefits through legislation on the country to which we belong?' With regard to past measures for Ireland, he would not admit that she was not going to be conciliated. But there was a still higher law to remember than that of conciliation. 'We desire to conciliate Ireland, we desire to soothe her people — the wounded feelings and the painful recollections of her people. We desire to attach her to this island in the silken cords of love; but there was a higher and a paramount aim in the measures that Parliament has passed, and that was that it should do its duty. It was to set itself right with the national conscience, with the opinion of the world, and with the principles of justice; and when that is done, I say fearlessly that, whether conciliation be at once realised or not, the position of this country is firm and invulnerable.'

Dealing with the Army Regulation Bill, in a speech at Whitby, the Premier averred that that measure alone was sufficient to make and confer honour upon the session. The power of the Crown was brought in, but it could not have been done without. With regard to the Ballot Bill, although it had been rejected, the time had not been lost. When the measure was presented next session at the door of the

House of Lords, he believed it would be with an authoritative knock which it would not have otherwise possessed. After deprecating hasty legislation, Mr. Gladstone said that 'no doubt many a clever fellow writing in a newspaper could put his finger on many a blot on our legislation, and show how it might have been done, and he had no doubt that he thought he could have done it better himself.' Referring next to a magazine article which appeared at the time, and which caused a strong sensation, entitled the 'Battle of Dorking,' the Premier exhorted his hearers not to be alarmed. The disposition to alarm sat worse upon the English than upon any other people, because we were accused abroad of being an arrogant and a self-assertive people; and nothing could be more injurious than for such a people to lash themselves into a state of apprehension and panic, or to endeavour to persuade themselves that all mankind were in a conspiracy against them. He exhorted them to be on their guard against alarmism. 'The power of this country is not declining,' he observed in conclusion. 'It is increasing—increasing in itself, and I believe increasing as compared with the power of the other nations of Europe. It is only our pride, it is only our passions, it is only our follies which can ever constitute a real danger to us. If we can master these, no other foe can hurt us; and many a long year will make its round, and many a generation of men will be gathered to its fathers, before the country in which we are born, and which we deeply

love, need forfeit or lose its place among the nations of the world.'

There were signs during the year 1871—as indeed it has been already indicated—that the popularity of the Ministry was declining. The Premier was too much in earnest for his Whig supporters, whose political animation was well-nigh suspended by the rapidity of his reforms. Rarely had the apathy of the country to great legislative schemes been so nobly overcome as during Mr. Gladstone's premiership, but a reaction began to set in. Early in 1871, even a section of his own constituents drew up a petition inviting him to resign his seat for Greenwich. This movement had a ridiculous but the only legitimate ending. The Premier was heavily weighted, according to the popular view, by such colleagues as Mr. Lowe and Mr. Ayrton—men of great and unquestioned ability, but whose reading of the public pulse was not of the surest and most satisfactory description. The labours of Hercules were thrown upon the shoulders of the First Minister, and it was a little too much to make him responsible for the erratic action of every subordinate. A meeting was called at the Lecture Hall, Greenwich, in support of the requisition desiring Mr. Gladstone to resign his seat; but the Liberals repudiated all connection with the movement, and the tables were turned in a surprising manner upon the requisitionists. After a scene of considerable violence, a vote of confidence was passed in Mr. Gladstone, and the proceedings closed with a volley of cheers for the right hon. gentleman.

The chief event of the recess, however, was the Premier's great speech on Blackheath. For two hours, on a bleak October day, Mr. Gladstone addressed an open air audience, consisting of some 20,000 persons. In his whole career he has, probably, never made a more dramatic appearance. Standing before the immense audience bare-headed, by the sheer force of his eloquence the right hon. gentleman subdued the opposition of those who had come expressly to circumvent him.* He began

* From a description of the scene which appeared in the *Daily News* we take the following passage:—'The dense mass heaved, and there rose from it an audible gasp as a burst of cheering was heard in the offing. Nearer rolled the cheers, mingled with some yells, but the silence of keen expectancy reigned before the hustings. The door at the back of the booth opened, there was some confusion among its occupants, and then—here was Mr. Gladstone, standing at the right hand of Mr. Angerstein. Then the throng broke the silence of expectancy. Peal after peal of cheering rent the air. There was a waving forest of hats. The cheering was spasmodic—it was too loud to be sustained, and ever as it drooped a little was audible the steady automaton-like hissing. But as yet there was little or no hooting, only the bitter, persistent hissing in the lulls of the cheering. If Mr. Angerstein flatters himself that in the remarks he made introducing Mr. Gladstone he was audible ten feet to his front, he simply labours under a delusion. The noise that drowned his words was utterly indescribable. When this brief preface was over, Mr. Gladstone stood forward bareheaded. There was something deeply dramatic in the intense silence which fell upon the vast crowd when the renewed burst of cheering, with which he was greeted, had subsided. But the first word he spoke was the signal of a fearful tempest of din. From all around the skirts of the crowd rose a something between a groan and a howl. So fierce was it that for a little space it might laugh to scorn the burst of cheering that strove to overmaster it. The battle raged between the two sounds, and looking straight upon the excited crowd stood Mr. Gladstone, calm, resolute, patient. It was fine to note the manly British impulse of fair-play that gained him a hearing when the first ebullition had exhausted itself, and the revulsion that followed so quickly and spontaneously, on the realisation of the suggestion that it was mean to hoot a man down without giving him a chance to speak for himself. After that Mr. Gladstone may be said to have had it all his own way. Of course at intervals there were repetitions of the

his speech by craving indulgence in respect to his discharge of local duties, and observed that, though it might be a serious misfortune to many whom it affected, the closing or restriction of Government establishments might at the same time be a duty to the nation. Three-fourths of the reduction in the number of the dockyard labourers was due to their predecessors, and the whole plan had been devised by a former Government. Touching upon the abolition of purchase in the army, Mr. Gladstone said he rejoiced to think that in a single session they had been able to achieve a task so formidable. He had faith in the army, in spite of all the writings of alarmists. The autumn manœuvres had demonstrated that, if it should please Providence to bring upon us the necessity, never was the country more able to entrust its defence to troops and to officers more worthy of their country, or more certain to make that defence effectual. In defending the War Minister, Mr. Gladstone said, 'There has been a fashion during the present year to scoff at Mr. Cardwell. I can only say

interruptions. When he first broached the dockyard question there was long, loud, and fervent groaning; when he named Ireland a cry rose of "God save Ireland!" from the serried files of Hibernians that had rendezvoused on the left flank. But long before he had finished he had so enthralled his audience, that impatient disgust was expressed at the handful who still continued their abortive efforts at interruption. When at length the two hours' oration was over, and the question was put that substantially was, whether Mr. Gladstone had cleared away from the judgment of his constituency the fog of prejudice and ill-feeling that unquestionably encircled him and his Ministry, the affirmative reply was given in bursts of all but unanimous cheering, than which none more earnest ever greeted a political leader.' Rarely has an English Premier ventured to throw himself thus completely upon the sympathies of the great mass of the people.

that, when he is condemned, I, for my part, am glad to share the condemnation. But I venture to affirm that no man who ever held the seals of office since the Secretaryship at War was established, has done so much for the reform and the efficiency of the army; and I am quite sure that when he retires from the office, he will leave behind a name entitled to the approval and the gratitude of the country.' Dealing with the Education Act, the speaker observed that a great and comprehensive measure of that kind could hardly be perfect. 'Indulgence, equity, the sacrifice of extreme opinions must be asked for in every quarter. But I ask those who are least satisfied with the Education Act this one and simple question, Whether it is not a great stride, and one achieved upon a path of real progress? I will not now attempt to say more upon the question than this:—On the one hand we shall endeavour to adhere to that principle of the Act which aims at the severance between the application of the State funds and controverted matters in religion; and on the other I must pause, for my own part, and I believe my colleagues would feel themselves obliged to pause before they could resolve to say to the parent desirous to send his child to a school of his own persuasion, compelled by public authority to send it to school, and unable to pay the charge, If you attempt to send the child to a school of your own persuasion, if you don't consent to send him to a school the principles of which you disapprove—namely, the rate school—we shall send you to prison. I don't think public opinion would sustain us in such a

course.' Alluding to the ballot, he expressed his belief that his hearers were of opinion the Government had made a good and wise choice in pressing that important question upon the attention of Parliament.

It was scarcely possible, after the recent important differences of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament, that Mr. Gladstone should avoid all reference to the functions and constitution of the House of Lords. When he arrived at this stage of his address, he was interrupted by a voice, 'Leave the constitution of the House of Lords alone!' Whereupon he proceeded to say:—

'I am not prepared to agree with my friend there, because the constitution of the House of Lords has often been a subject of consideration amongst the wisest and most sober-minded men; as, for example, when a proposal—of which my friend disapproves, perhaps—was made a few years ago to make a moderate addition to the House of Lords of peers holding their peerages for life. I am not going to discuss that particular measure; I will only say, without entering into details that would be highly interesting, but which the vast range of the subject makes impossible on the present occasion—I will only say that I believe there are various particulars in which the constitution of the House of Lords might, under favourable circumstances, be improved. And I am bound to say that, though I believe there are some politicians bearing the name of Liberal who approve the proceedings of the House of Lords with respect to the Ballot Bill at the close of last session, I must own that I deeply lament that proceeding. I have a shrewd suspicion in my mind that a very large proportion of the people of England have a sneaking kindness for the hereditary principle. My observation has not been of a very brief period, and what I have observed is this, that wherever there is anything to be done, or to be given, and there are two candidates for it who are exactly alike—alike in opinions, alike in character, alike in possessions, the one being a commoner and the other a lord—the Englishman is very apt indeed to prefer the lord.'

In giving instances in support of his opinion, Mr. Gladstone dealt with a new social movement which at that time was the subject of much discussion. This

movement was originated by Mr. Scott Russell, and its object was to improve the condition of the working classes by an alliance of workmen with (chiefly) Conservative statesmen. The memorandum which formed its basis was signed by Lords Salisbury, Carnarvon, Lichfield, Sandon, and John Manners, and by Sir J. S. Pakington, Sir Stafford Northcote, and Mr. Gathorne Hardy. Mr. Gladstone indulged in a little pleasantry at the expense of this scheme, whose ultimate issues did not satisfy its promoters. 'Here was one body on one side, another body on the other side, and in the middle Mr. Scott Russell. Mr. Russell comes in communication with both of these bodies. He speaks first to the one and then to the other. You have seen a clergyman in a large church when he gives out his text; he first of all looks to the people in one part of the church, and says, "You will find it written so-and-so," and then to the other side of the congregation, "You will find it so-and-so." This is exactly, or almost exactly, what seems to have been done by Mr. Scott Russell. The only difference is this—that, unfortunately, Mr. Scott Russell gives a text out of one Testament to the people on this side, and a text out of the other Testament to the people on the other side.' As to the composition of the body he had organised, he might have said, 'I have organised a body of educated, intelligent, and independent men,' and perhaps that would have occurred in another country. But what is the language he used? He said, 'I have organised this body, and what does it contain? It contains peers, lords, baronets, and one

commoner—one solitary commoner among peers, lords, and baronets.' It was by these means that Mr. Scott Russell thought to make his prescription most acceptable to those for whom it was intended. The right hon. gentleman, however, speaking of the House of Lords, went on to acknowledge the admirable and exemplary manner in which many of the peers performed their duties.

Detailing the great advantages which had accrued from the legislation of the past generation, including Free Trade, the removal of twenty millions of taxation, a cheap press, and an Education bill, Mr. Gladstone enforced the lesson that Englishmen must depend upon themselves for their future well-being and improvement. After describing those who promised Utopian benefits to the working man as quacks, deluded and beguiled by a spurious philanthropy, the Premier thus concluded his long and animated address:—

'How, in a country where wealth accumulates with such vast rapidity, are we to check the growth of luxury and selfishness by a sound and healthy opinion? How are we to secure to labour its due honour; I mean not only to the labour of the hands, but to the labour of the man with any and all the faculties which God has given him? How are we to make ourselves believe, and how are we to bring the country to believe, that in the sight of God and man labour is honourable and idleness is contemptible? Depend upon it, gentlemen, I do but speak the serious and solemn truth when I say that beneath the political questions which are found on the surface lie those deeper and more searching questions that enter into the breast and strike home to the conscience and mind of every man; and it is upon the solution of these questions that the well-being of England must depend. Gentlemen, I use the words of a popular poet when I give vent to this sentiment of hope, with which for one I venture to look forward to the future of this country. He says:—

> "The ancient virtue is not dead, and long may it endure,
> May wealth in England—"

and I am sure he means by wealth that higher sense of it—prosperity, and sound prosperity—

"May wealth in England never fail, nor pity for the poor."

May strength and the means of material prosperity never be wanting to us; but it is far more important that there shall not be wanting the disposition to use those means aright. Gentlemen, I shall go from this meeting, having given you the best account of my position in my feeble power, within the time and under the circumstances of the day—I shall go from this meeting strengthened by the comfort of your kindness and your indulgence to resume my humble share in public labours. No motive will more operate upon me in stimulating me to the discharge of duty than the gratitude with which I look back upon the, I believe, unexampled circumstances under which you made me your representative. But I shall endeavour—I shall make it my hope—to show that gratitude less by words of idle compliment or hollow flattery than by a manful endeavour, according to the measure of my gifts, humble as they may be, to render service to a Queen who lives in the hearts of the people, and to a nation, with respect to which I will say that through all posterity, whether it be praised or whether it be blamed, whether it be acquitted or whether it be condemned, it will be acquitted or condemned upon this issue, of having made a good or a bad use of the most splendid opportunities; of having turned to proper account, or failed to turn to account, the powers, the energies, the faculties which rank the people of this little island as among the few great nations that have stamped their name and secured their fame among the greatest nations of the world.'

The year 1871 was, in many respects, a memorable one. When it opened, war was still raging between Prussia and France, but a treaty of peace was signed in the month of May. We have already seen how our own difficulties with the United States were placed in the way of a satisfactory adjustment. Towards the close of the year, the whole nation was moved with a sense of gratitude to Almighty God for the recovery of the heir to the Throne from a dangerous illness, and one to which for a long period none but a fatal result was feared and anticipated.

The Parliamentary history of the year was not altogether satisfactory, though there have been sessions since quite as barren in acts of great and useful legislation. On the 1st of January, the disestablishment of the Irish Church was finally completed. With regard to extra-Parliamentary politics, in the autumn an agitation was commenced for the reform or the abolition of the House of Lords, but it speedily subsided; and Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, defended the Lords in his speech at Blackheath, while admitting that the constitution of the House might be improved. Sir Charles Dilke caused considerable sensation by first attacking the Queen's administration of the Civil List in a lecture delivered at Newcastle, and avowing himself a Republican a few days later in a speech made at Bristol. Not, perhaps, as the consequence of this, but owing rather to a special conjuncture of circumstances, the country shortly afterwards testified its loyalty to the Throne in an especially marked and enthusiastic degree. Lastly, there was a continuance of the Home Rule agitation, while Mr. Dixon and a powerful body of Nonconformists strongly attacked the clauses of the Education Bill which allowed of aid to denominational schools—one leading object sought being the exclusion of religious teaching from day schools.

The Gladstone Administration had now passed its zenith, and its decadence had already begun. There are some reforms which, when they do not touch the mass of the people, are readily acquiesced in; but when a Ministry resolutely sets itself to the reform of abuses

in all directions, however laudable its objects, it is sure to incur the hostility of individual interests. Mr. Bruce alienated the whole of the brewing interest by his Licensing Bill, and the Government acquired further unpopularity by the disasters reflecting upon the Admiralty. Indignation was caused when, upon the promotion of Sir M. Smith to the Privy Council, the Attorney-General (Sir R. Collier) was gazetted as a Puisne Judge of the Common Pleas, for the purpose of qualifying him for an appointment to the Judicial Committee, which was soon afterwards completed. Opponents of the abolition of purchase, moreover, did not forget to enlarge upon what they described as the straining of the Constitution by the issue of the Royal warrant. Rightly or wrongly, these and other matters led to much obloquy being cast upon the Government; and the Premier—to whom personally little or no blame could attach for many of these transactions—found towards the close of the year that his popularity was waning. A reaction had set in against so-called 'heroic' legislation—which really meant that Mr. Gladstone, who in 1868 so clearly and unmistakably interpreted the public sentiment, was now in advance of it. His earnestness and enthusiasm were already beginning to be but ill-appreciated by the very classes who had wafted him into power, and given him such an enormous majority.

But, in looking back upon the legislative enactments of the three sessions of 1869, 1870, and 1871, who can deny that they warrant the designation which we have given to the present division of this work?

That period which (to say nothing of minor measures) witnessed the passing of the Irish Church Act, the Endowed Schools Bill, the Bankruptcy Bill, the Habitual Criminals Bill, the Irish Land Act, the Elementary Education Act, the Abolition of Purchase in the Army, the negotiation of the Washington Treaty, the passing of the University Tests Bill and of the Trades Union Bill, and the repeal of the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, may well be entitled to the appellation of the 'golden age of Liberalism.' There have been few periods in the history of this country—we might venture almost to say there have been none—when measures of equal magnitude have been passed within this limited space of time. 'The hour and the man' were both designed for the task which had to be accomplished. Never was there an age when a stronger zeal for reform was manifested—taking reform now not merely in a political and Parliamentary, but in a social, religious, and national sense; and never was there a statesman more fully capable of meeting the needs of such an age than Mr. Gladstone. They were the complement of each other, and when Englishmen reflect upon the great legislative achievements of the time, it is well for them also to remember that the cry of justice to Ireland, and other demands for imperial legislative reforms, owed their fulfilment to the untiring energy, the dauntless will, and the high moral and political courage of him whose name now occupies so conspicuous a position in our political annals.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS—THE BALLOT—IRISH UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

The Year 1872—Recovery of the Prince of Wales—Growing Unpopularity of the Government—Debate on the Address—The Premier on Mr. Disraeli's Survey of the Ministerial Policy—Debates on Sir Robert Collier's Appointment—The 'Ewelme Scandal'—The Government and the Public Parks—Sir Charles Dilke's Motion on the Civil List—Opposed by Mr. Gladstone—Extraordinary Scene in the House—The Ballot Bill—The Measure carried—The Alabama Claims—Mr. Gladstone on the Washington Treaty—The Geneva Arbitration—Award of the Arbitrators—Protest of Sir Alexander Cockburn—Irish University Education—Scheme of the Government—Great Speech by the Premier—Details of the Measure—The Bill in Danger—Debate on the Second Reading—Speeches of Mr. Lowe, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone—Defeat of the Government—Ministerial Interregnum—Mr. Disraeli declines to take office—Mr. Gladstone on the Situation—Resumes the Premiership—Measures of the Session of 1873—Ministerial Changes.

THE new year dawned amid universal symptoms of rejoicing on the part of the people. The Queen invited her subjects to share in her gratitude for the recovery of the Prince of Wales, and a thanksgiving service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, under circumstances of splendour and impressiveness. The reception which the Sovereign and the Heir to the Throne met with on their progress from Buckingham Palace testified to the hold which the Royal family had upon the affections of the people, whose demonstrations acquired a deeper fervour from the recollection of the period of deep anxiety, now happily overpast. National prosperity, too, was ad-

vancing in a marked degree, and there seemed no reason to dread the introduction of discordant elements into the life of the commonwealth.

The chief political feature of the period was the continued unpopularity of the Government. Speculation was rife as to its stability, and yet those who predicted its downfall during the session of 1872 were unable to point to a combination powerful enough to take its place. For that reason, the strongest opponents of the Ministry, while anxious to damage its prestige and to humiliate it in the eyes of the country, were not desirous of witnessing its overthrow. By way of illustrating the divisions and the spirit which existed, a Liberal journal observed that 'many would like to knock over Lord Hatherley, many to expel Mr. Forster, many to rid the Government of Mr. Bruce, many to hurt Mr. Lowe, most of all, perhaps, to humiliate Mr. Gladstone. But they all want to know how this can be done without causing a dissolution or change of Government. It is a spiteful problem in *maxima* and *minima*, how to inflict on the Government the maximum of discredit with the minimum of immediate result. The censors of the Government are like a dueller who declares he does not want to kill his antagonist, but only to "give him a lesson that he will remember to the day of his death." That, however, is a very delicate feat to achieve when you are playing with deadly weapons. You may wish to "wing" your adversary, and send a ball just through his heart. And the great question now is, Can the Government, even with the cordial help of its many open enemies

and insincere friends, manage to receive the tokens of the accumulated dislikes of so many different sections, and yet survive the session?' The Prime Minister, looking round upon his lieutenants, could scarcely discover one who was not credited, justly or unjustly, with having contributed his share to the weight of opprobrium under which the Government was labouring. But, while not exempting the Ministry from blame in several matters, every candid mind must confess that much of the criticism passed upon it was groundless.

In the debate on the Address, Mr. Disraeli challenged the policy of Ministers, remarking that they had adopted a new system of vindicating their characters during the recess. 'We really have had no time to forget anything. Her Majesty's Ministers may be said during the last six months to have lived in a blaze of apology.' After protesting against this new system, the right hon. gentleman continued, 'The notices of motion given this evening will afford her Majesty's Government ample opportunities for defending their conduct, past or present. If it is in the power of the Government to prove to the country that our naval administration is such as befits a great naval Power, they will soon have an occasion of doing so; and if they are desirous of showing that one of the transcendental privileges of a strong Government is to evade Acts of Parliament which they have themselves passed, I believe, from what caught my ear this evening, that that opportunity will also soon be furnished them.' Attacking next the clauses of the Queen's Speech, Mr. Disraeli observed,

with regard to Ireland, that there had originally been a reference to the 'third branch of the Upas tree,' but it had slipped out at the last moment. The Ballot had been preferred to such measures as the Mines Regulation Act and Sanitary Legislation. He condemned the paragraph relating to the Washington Treaty as frigid and jejune, and utterly inadequate to the occasion. Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, having full control and supervision of the negotiations at Washington, were solely responsible for the treaty, whose terms he proceeded to discuss, objecting strongly to its retrospective clauses. He demanded from the Government their grounds for stating that the treaty excluded claims which were preposterous and wild, and which equalled a tribute from a conquered people. He asked for the view of the American Government upon our reading of the treaty. Her Majesty's Ministers must be perfectly frank upon the question, for it appeared to him that if they got into a Serbonian bog of diplomacy upon this matter the consequences might be enormous and fatal.

Mr. Gladstone, undisturbed apparently by his rival's sarcasm, at once said that the Government courted the most searching inquiry into the case of the 'Megæra,' and into Sir Robert Collier's appointment. Every assistance would be given by the Government to the taking of the judgment of the House upon these questions. Having adverted to the recovery from illness first of her Majesty and then of the Prince of Wales, the Premier touched upon the Irish references in the Speech, and assured the leader of the Opposition that he

was mistaken in his assumption as to the question of education in Ireland. He next justified the precedence which had been given to the ballot; and with regard to the Alabama case, he said that it was the duty of Ministers to state their case to the Government of the United States, and especially to the people of this country, in the mildest terms possible consistent with an appreciation of the momentous importance of the question. The paragraph relating to the treaty was in his opinion, therefore, quite adequate to the emergency. Mr. Disraeli's historical retrospect of the negotiations he accepted as proving that the British Government had at no time acceded, either in intention or otherwise, to an instrument admitting constructive claims. Whatever blame fell on those who concluded the treaty must be borne by the Government—the Commissioners were entirely free from it; but he denied that there was blame anywhere. Large concessions had undoubtedly been made to the American Government—such as accepting retrospective action and abstaining from claiming compensation for the Fenian raids in Canada—but they were justifiable. The American Government had made no protest against the interpretation publicly put on the treaty in the House of Lords in the previous June. In consequence of the American case having been only in possession of all the members of the Cabinet for a week or so, a communication could not be addressed to the American Government until within the last few days. The treaty was not ambiguous, and could not be read in two contradictory senses; on

the contrary, the Government would contend that, tried by grammar, logic, common sense, policy, or any other conceivable criterion, its only just and unequivocal meaning was that which they put upon it. It amounted almost to an interpretation of insanity to suppose that any negotiators could intend to admit, in a peaceful arbitration, claims of such an unmeasured character as the right hon. gentleman had partially described, such as he (Mr. Gladstone) for a moment glanced at, and such as it was really impossible to have supposed the American Government to intend; these would be claims transcending every limit hitherto known or heard of—claims which not even the last extremities of war and the lowest depths of misfortune would force a people with a spark of spirit, with the hundredth part of the traditions or courage of the people of this country, to submit to at the point of death. They relied on the friendly disposition which prevailed between the two peoples for an amicable settlement, but under no circumstances would the Government allow themselves to swerve from their sacred and paramount duty to their country.

Sir Robert Collier's appointment led to very warm debates in both Houses. In the Lords the Duke of Argyll severely condemned the letter from Lord Chief Justice Cockburn protesting against the appointment—a letter which, he said, contained 'railing, nay, almost ribald accusations.' Lord Stanhope's vote of censure upon the Government was negatived by 89 against 87 votes. A similar vote was moved in the Commons by Mr. Cross,

whereupon Sir Roundell Palmer moved an amendment to the effect that there was no just cause for Parliamentary censure. His speech was of great service to the Government. Mr. Gathorne Hardy said that he did not wish to impute wrong motives, but there were cases in which Acts of Parliament had been dealt with in a peculiar manner, and statutes dispensed with by the Premier. Mr. Gladstone rose and complained that irrelevant topics—such as the appointment to the living of Ewelme—had been introduced into the debate by the preceding speaker. He asked the House to reserve its judgment, and not to allow the question of the construction of an Act of Parliament to be prejudiced by the introduction of matters which had nothing whatsoever to do with it. If he (the speaker) had been guilty of the wilful violation of a statute, he should deserve not merely exclusion from office but from Parliament altogether. The admissions made in the course of the debate, however, showed that the statute had been obeyed, and that a competent man had been appointed—nay, more than a competent man, looking to the status and rights of an Attorney-General. The Government had unsuccessfully applied to three Judges before appointing Sir Robert Collier, and without such a resource would have been brought into serious practical difficulty, having regard to the dignity of the office. They had not violated the statute—this was admitted as affecting the letter of it—but only somebody's idea of the intention of the statute. The meaning of the qualification specified in the Act was

judicial *status*, judicial experience being merely one element among others. The burden of proof to the contrary lay upon the mover of the motion. The Government did not foresee the storm that would be raised over this appointment, and if they had foreseen it they would not have been so foolish as to have evoked it. But was there ever a vote of censure passed upon a Government—a sentence of capital punishment—that hung upon so slender a thread? He hoped the House would never be drawn aside from the straight road of justice into slippery paths. He did not consider the consequences to the Government of this motion; he put it upon higher grounds. Moreover, if carried, Sir Robert Collier would feel that a shade rested upon his judicial fame, and that it possibly might become the end of his judicial career. The House of Lords had declined to pass judgment against this appointment; and he was well convinced that the House of Commons would refuse to fall into the snare.

The House negatived the vote of censure by a majority of 27.

Another matter which led to a debate in the month of March was one described by the papers as 'the Ewelme scandal.' In this case the Premier had appointed the Rev. W. W. Harvey to the vacant rectory of Ewelme; but as the statute required that the rector of that parish should be a member of the Oxford Convocation, Mr. Harvey—who had been educated at Cambridge—was made a member of the Oxford Convocation, in order to satisfy the statute. Here again no question arose as to

the fitness of the appointment; but Mr. Mowbray, in bringing the matter before the House of Commons, affirmed that the act was a direct and wanton violation of the statute of Parliament and of the statutes of the University, and that it had led to most reprehensible delay. Mr. Gladstone, in his reply, having thrust aside the irrelevant portions of Mr. Mowbray's speech, asked what the Government had to do with the qualifying office for Mr. Harvey? As a Minister, he had nothing to do with it; and had it been a qualifying office given by the Emperor of China or the Mikado of Japan it could not have been more independent of the action of the British Government than in this case. Neither had the qualification anything to do with the duties of the post. Membership of Convocation did not imply education at the University, and if the words introduced in the Lords had been understood so to limit the rights of the Crown, it would have been his duty to advise the Crown to withhold its assent. Mr. Harvey had not acquired a colourable qualification, but one solid, substantial, and perfect. As to the probable question, what demon prompted him to create this difficulty for himself, Mr. Gladstone said that his demon was simply and solely the desire to appoint the fittest man to the parish fittest for the man. Mr. Harvey was eminent as a divine, and his ill-health rendered his immediate removal to a more salubrious neighbourhood desirable. The Premier concluded by saying that he stood upon the construction of the Act, which he had in no sense violated.

The debate closed without a division. Several scenes occurred at an early period of the session in connection with Mr. Ayrton's Bill for the Regulation of the Parks. The Government introduced a clause throwing on the Houses of Parliament the responsibility of certain bye-laws for the parks. Mr. Hardy stigmatised this as a cowardly proceeding, whereupon Mr. Gladstone rebuked him for bringing an acid and venomous spirit into the debates, and said that it was the bungling and feeble conduct of the late Government which had led to the present difficulties. Mr. Disraeli complained that when his friend Mr. Hardy moved in this question in 1866, the present Prime Minister sat night after night in sullen silence, and never spoke with reference to the proceedings that took place in the Park, except when he addressed a tumultuous multitude from the balcony of his own private residence. Mr. Gladstone replied with excusable warmth that his opponent's imagination had led him astray; but, as Mr. Sheridan had remarked, there had been former occasions when a gentleman had drawn on his memory for his jokes and his imagination for his facts. With respect to the one intelligible sentence in the right hon. gentleman's observations, there was no foundation of fact in it whatever. When the right hon. gentleman said that after the lapse of six years it was necessary to rub up one's recollection by reference to what had really occurred, he strongly recommended him to practise the doctrine he had preached, and to improve his memory of those things before he ventured to make such extraordinary statements. Col. Gilpin having

attacked Mr. Gladstone in a similar manner, the Premier retorted, amidst the cheers and laughter of the House, that he did not think the imagination which prevailed on the front bench had extended so far back as the third. The Government ultimately carried their proposals.

Of all the scenes, however, which took place this session—and indeed for many years previously—the most violent and discreditable was that which arose out of Sir Charles Dilke's motion for returns bearing upon the Civil List. Lord Bury having asked whether the oath of allegiance and Sir C. Dilke's declaration at Newcastle that he was a Republican were not irreconcilable, and having observed also that the present motion was a colourable method of repeating that declaration, the Speaker decided that there was nothing irregular in the motion, and Sir C. Dilke was allowed to proceed. The hon. member said his aim was to show that Parliament had a general and special right to inquire into the management of the Civil List, and that there ought to be such an inquiry. The object of an inquiry was not to destroy the vested interests of the holders of sinecures and unnecessary offices, but to prevent any new interests being created, and to facilitate the next settlement of the Civil List. After a lengthy explanation of the nature of the returns moved for, and an examination of the Exchequer accounts from the beginning of the reign, Sir Charles Dilke withdrew a previous statement of his that the Queen had paid no income-tax, and expressed his regret that he had been misled. His reasons for the

opportuneness of the present inquiry were—the public belief that the Sovereign had accumulated large savings; the grants to the Princesses, which he asserted were entirely unprecedented; and the secrecy maintained in respect of Royal wills, which made it impossible to ascertain the Sovereign's private fortune. He urged the importance of granting the inquiry because of an impression which prevailed that under the shadow of the Crown large sums were wasted.

When the hon. member sat down there was a general impression that the House would go to a division at once, but Mr. Gladstone rose and replied to Sir Charles Dilke's address. The Premier, who was loudly cheered throughout by both sides of the House, complained that the hon. member had been careless in the investigation of his facts, and observed that the result of the inquiry of a select committee had been to prove a very large reduction in the Civil List compared with the two former reigns. To go into the charges brought forward was impossible without notice; but these charges and the observations about sinecures were equally beside the mark, and would not bear the inference which Sir Charles Dilke had suggested. Some portion of the information now asked for was already before the House in a different form. With regard to the new portion, Mr. Gladstone said it was impossible to consider it without referring to the incident in which the motion originated; and, by his unfortunate speech at Newcastle, the hon. member had brought the subject into an ill-omened association with proposals to change

the form of our Government, which were most repugnant to the great body of the people. Mr. Gladstone severely condemned the circumstances of this meeting, and said it was Sir Charles Dilke's duty, in his assumed character of a 'public instructor,' to have made it clear to his audience that Parliament was solely responsible for the Civil List, and that the Queen had nothing to do with the settlement of it. To grant the motion would be to propagate the belief in the country that the House of Commons had assented to it in direct reference to the Newcastle speech, and as an initiation of the change. The Government were not willing to contribute to the creation of such an impression. Her Majesty had faithfully adhered to her compact with the nation, and, contrasting this with former times, the Premier mentioned that the Queen had, since the commencement of her reign, spent £600,000 on private pensions; and he urged the evil precedent it would set to future Sovereigns if the people attempted to reopen the life bargain. He concluded by asking the House, as a matter of policy, and as a matter of grateful duty to the Queen, to reject the motion, and that without further discussion.

For the honour of the House of Commons, the scene which ensued is probably unexampled in its history. The number of sympathisers with Sir Charles Dilke's resolution, either in the House or the country, was exceedingly small; but, as the Speaker had ruled that there was nothing irregular in it, he and his seconder were, of course, entitled to that hearing which would

have been given to motions less distasteful. Members hooted and groaned with stentorian power, and the scene baffled description. Mr. Liddell afterwards expressed a hope that the whole proceedings would be regarded as a comedy, but it was a comedy into which only the rougher elements of burlesque entered. Mr. Auberon Herbert endeavoured to second the motion, but was met with a storm of cries and howls which completely drowned his voice. When the cries of 'Divide!' mingled with groans and hisses had to some extent subsided, the hon. member apologised for Sir Charles Dilke, for his unintended personal attack on the Sovereign, and then proclaimed his own preference for a Republican form of Government. A large number of members hereupon left the House, while those who remained continued to shout and to interrupt the speaker. Mr. Herbert, with much *sang-froid*, sent for a glass of water, which was interpreted as a sign that he meant to be heard out. The remainder of his speech consisted only of disjointed sentences.

Just as Mr. Herbert was replying to Mr. Gladstone's complaint that the hon. baronet had not supplied full information, an hon. member rose, and blandly said that he did not think there were forty members present. Several members immediately left the House, calling upon others to 'Come out;' but the Speaker found that more than the required number still remained. Mr. Herbert rose again as the Speaker reached the magical number of 'forty,' and was

entering into further details connected with the Privy Purse and the Duchy of Lancaster, when another hon. member rose, and, addressing the Speaker, observed, 'It appears to me, sir, the House has considerably thinned since you last counted; I move that it be counted.' There were still more than forty present, and this was found to be the case on a third count. At last an hon. member thought he had hit upon a solution of the difficulty. This was Lord George Hamilton, who rose and said, 'Mr. Speaker, I espy strangers present.' The Speaker then ordered strangers to withdraw—'strangers,' of course, including the reporters. It was understood that during the remainder of Mr. Herbert's speech the cries and interruptions were renewed with increased vehemence. The cries proceeded chiefly from members in the more remote and obscure parts of the House. Amid the general confusion were heard imitations of the crowing of cocks, whereat Mr. Dodson rose to order. He said he would not ask whether the state of the House and the scene they were witnessing were for the credit and dignity of the House of Commons; he would merely, as a point of order, ask whether the sounds that proceeded from near the chair were not un-Parliamentary and disorderly.

The Speaker said the sounds he had heard were undoubtedly gross violations of the order of the House; and he could not refrain from expressing the pain with which he had witnessed the scene that had just taken place. Other members having spoken, and a

motion for adjournment made by Mr. Dillwyn having been defeated by a large majority, Mr. Fawcett rose and said that though a year ago he might have voted for the motion, now that it was associated with the Newcastle speech, which he thoroughly disapproved, he should vote against it. The question of Republicanism ought not to be raised on a miserable haggle over the cost of the Queen's household. Mr. Liddell denied that the Conservative party had attempted to stifle discussion. He blamed Mr. Herbert for endeavouring to brave the House, and then said that when history looked back upon the proceedings of that evening, it would probably be all regarded as a 'Comedy of Errors.' Sir Charles Dilke having expressed his determination to divide the House, the original question was put, when there appeared—Ayes, 2; Noes, 276. The two members who supported Sir C. W. Dilke and Mr. Herbert, were Mr. G. Anderson and Sir W. Lawson. The result of the division was hailed with loud cheering.

The Ballot Bill, the chief measure of the session, led to many protracted debates. It was introduced by Mr. Forster, and its second reading was carried in a meagre house by 109 to 56. Mr. Walter said he had voted against the ballot, believing that its introduction was but preliminary to a new reform bill, which would abolish all little boroughs, and boroughs which were really fragments of counties, and enfranchise all county householders. He believed that these boroughs would, under the bill, be bought wholesale,

and that equal electoral districts would soon be inevitable. Unless the country was prepared for that, the House ought not to pass the bill. For himself, however, he should oppose it no more. After the discussion of many of the details of the measure, a crisis arose in connection with an amendment moved by Sir W. Harcourt, which was carried against the Government, by 274 votes to 246, a large number of Liberals voting with the majority, and others absenting themselves. The Government agreed to accept a modified form of this amendment as follows:—'No person shall, directly or indirectly, induce any voter to display his ballot-paper after he shall have marked the same, so as to make known to any person the name of the candidate for or against whom he has so marked his vote'—the penalty for doing this to be three months' imprisonment with hard labour. Mr. Gladstone then announced the intention of the Government to proceed with the bill, and the third reading was eventually carried by 276 votes to 218. Some amendments to the bill were carried in the Lords, and when it was returned amended to the House of Commons, Mr. Forster moved to disagree with making the ballot optional. This, he said, would render the bill useless, or worse than useless. Mr. Disraeli, in supporting the Lords' amendments, remarked that he regarded compulsory secrecy as a degrading punishment for 'the excesses of electoral society,' much as the Riot Act for rioting. He denied entirely the demand of the country for the ballot.

Mr. Gladstone retorted that his opponent, who thought the ballot stood in the same relation to corruption as the Riot Act did to rioting, evidently regarded it as an efficient remedy. He (Mr. Gladstone) appealed not only to the Liberals, but to the newly-elected Conservative members for various constituencies specified, to show that there was a very great demand for the ballot. The right hon. gentleman also pointed out that very stringent securities were taken against any publication by the presiding officer of an illiterate person's vote, which securities the Lords had done away with.

The option-giving amendments of the Lords were disagreed with. A compromise was subsequently effected, the Upper House yielding the main point in dispute, and the Commons accepting, with certain modifications, the Scrutiny clause, as well as Lord Beauchamp's amendment making the operation of the bill temporary. This important measure, effecting a complete revolution in the system of voting, then received the Royal assent; and the first elections conducted under its provisions were of the most orderly and satisfactory character.

Although the ballot was the chief incident in the domestic legislation of this session, the question of the Alabama claims more than rivalled it for the excitement which it caused throughout the country. In December, 1871, there was a formal meeting at Geneva of the Arbitration Commission appointed to consider these claims. The sittings were adjourned until the following June. Meanwhile, by January, 1872, the agitation in

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expression. The limit of my assertion, stated briefly, was, and is, as follows:—

I believe the meaning of the Treaty to be clear and unambiguous, according to any legitimate test whatever which can be applied to it. This proposition I am, of course, ready to sustain in argument. But every other person is equally entitled to think, if he see cause, that what I hold to be clear and unambiguous is dark and doubtful; or, that it is clear and unambiguous in the sense contradictory to mine. What I trust is that others, upon a close examination, will not see cause to think any such thing. This point a little time and patience cannot fail thoroughly to elucidate.

Setting aside the remark which I did not use, and which I think open

to severe animadversion, I have always understood, and still understand, that any man is at liberty to hold and to state with the utmost confidence an opinion as to the meaning of a document (and this I have done), without being open to the charge of what I conceive to be a gross offence, viz., his presuming to restrain for others the liberty which he claims himself. Indeed, speaking according to the usages and habits of English public life, I feel as if the utterance of such a proposition were not so much a truth as a truism.

If, however, this truth or truism be applicable to documents in general, it requires but a moderate share of modesty to adopt it in the case of documents such as a treaty and its protocols.'

In May, a draft supplementary treaty was drawn up, by which both nations agreed in future to abstain from claims for indirect losses. This treaty was presented to the American Senate, and approved. In the House of Commons, on the 27th of May, Mr. Disraeli put several questions to the Prime Minister upon the state of the negotiations. Mr. Gladstone replied that the American Senate had agreed, by a large majority, to the last article which had been prepared by her Majesty's Government, but with certain verbal amendments. The English Cabinet, which had only met an hour and a half ago, had not yet been able to transmit its final argument to the American Minister. He was, therefore, not prepared at present to state the proposed modifications; they were strictly confidential between the two Governments, and could not be disclosed until the disclosure might be made without disadvantage to the important interests involved. As to ratification, before that could take place the conditions must be transmitted across the water. He considered it would be premature to make any

announcement in Parliament with respect to the steps which might be taken at Geneva until they had been able to conclude the business then in hand as to the supplementary enactments. The proceedings at Geneva must depend in a material degree upon the result of these negotiations. If an enlargement of time should become necessary, power could be given by agreement between the two Governments. The Government appreciated the importance of the element of time as respected Geneva, but they were still more impressed with its importance as regarded the negotiations now going on; and on behalf of his colleagues and himself, he assured the House that not one moment would be lost in returning their reply to the last proposal of the American Government, so as to make their contribution towards producing the consummation which both nations so ardently desired.

The British Government having objected to certain modifications in the supplementary article, a lengthened correspondence ensued, and the feeling of the country found vent in debates in Parliament. On the meeting of the Congress in June, differences arose as to the mode of procedure. The arbitration tribunal, however, commenced its sittings, and was constituted as follows:—Count Frederick Sclopis, for Italy, president; Baron Stæmpfli, for Switzerland; Vicomte d'Itajuba, for Brazil; Mr. G. F. Adams, for the United States; and Sir Alexander E. Cockburn, for Great Britain. After several adjournments, the arbitrators voluntarily declared that the indirect claims were invalid, and contrary to

international law; whereupon President Grant consented to their withdrawal. On the 14th of September, at a final meeting, the arbitrators agreed upon their award. All the arbitrators found Great Britain liable for damages for the injuries done by the *Alabama;* four mulcted us for those done by the *Florida;* and three for those done by the *Shenandoah.* The liability in the case of these vessels was to extend to the tenders as well as the cruisers to which they were attached. Great Britain, however, was held not to be responsible for the acts of the *Georgia,* or of any of the Confederate cruisers beyond the three above-named. The arbitrators likewise rejected altogether the claim of the United States Government for expenditure incurred in the pursuit and capture of the cruisers. The practical or pecuniary result of the award was, that England was adjudged to pay a gross sum of 15,500,000 dollars in gold (about £3,229,166) in satisfaction and final settlement of all claims, including interest. The amount of claims preferred before the tribunal by the United States in the revised statement presented in April, 1872, was 19,739,095 dollars in gold, to which was added a claim for expenses of pursuit and capture to the amount of 7,080,478 dollars, with interest at seven per cent. on the whole amount for about ten years, or, in all, 45,500,000 dollars in gold, being about £9,479,166 sterling.

Sir Alexander Cockburn differed from the rest of the arbitrators, and published his reasons for so doing. This document, which did not assume the nature of a formal judgment, occupied nearly three hundred pages

of the *London Gazette*, being one of the most elaborate official papers on record. The English representative made a powerful reply to the unjust aspersions which had been cast upon this country, but admitted the justice of the award for the *Alabama*. While strongly opposing the other awards, he counselled the acceptance by the British people of the judgment of a tribunal by whose award they had freely consented to abide; and he hoped that in time to come, as the result of the Geneva arbitration, 'no sense of past wrong unredeemed would stand in the way of the friendly and harmonious intercourse which should subsist between two great and kindred nations.' Some time afterwards a final settlement was effected of this great difficulty on the basis indicated in the award.

Though the session of 1872 could scarcely vie with some of its predecessors in the matter of its legislative acts, it is yet not without its title to remembrance. Besides the satisfactory adjustment of the *Alabama* claims and the conclusion of a new French treaty, the following measures of great domestic importance were passed:—The Ballot Act, the Scotch Education Act, two Acts relating to the Regulation of Mines, the Licensing Act, the Public Health Act, and the Adulteration Act. These measures at least demonstrated that the welfare of the people was not neglected by the Government.

Ireland—a name associated with the most brilliant legislative triumphs of the Government—was fated also to be its most serious stumbling-block. The Irish

University question had long awaited a settlement, and Mr. Gladstone addressed himself to the task at an early period in the session of 1873. Successfully to have grappled with this difficulty would have justified Mr. Gladstone's boast that, in its effects, as well as its magnitude, his proposed scheme was in no wise inferior to the Irish Church and the Irish Land Acts. But so many considerations were involved in dealing with this subject, that the country was scarcely surprised when the Premier ultimately failed in his purpose. Of all questions upon which a perfect unanimity of sentiment was essential, that of university education stood foremost; and it was found that this sentiment was lacking. On the 13th of February, the Ministerial scheme was unfolded. The Premier said that for the third time he now endeavoured to discharge a duty vital not only to the honour and existence of the Government, but to the welfare and prosperity of Ireland. He emphatically declared on the part of the Ministry that they did not share in the opinion held in some quarters that Ireland offered but a barren field for these efforts of legislation. Industry flourished in Ireland, the wealth of the community was increasing, order was respected, ordinary crime was less than in England, agrarian crime had greatly diminished, and treasonable crime had disappeared. After bespeaking indulgence for the intricate and complex details into which he should be obliged to enter, and observing that though the Government admitted the urgent necessity for dealing with intermediary education, they yet did not intend to mix up that question with university

education, Mr. Gladstone referred in a sarcastic vein to the anticipatory criticisms in one of the daily journals upon his measure, and repelled energetically the insinuation that it would be tinged with Ultramontane influence. So far from this being the fact, the Government had not even communicated with any of the bodies interested in university education, and the measure appealed for support solely to the equity and justice on which it was based. At the same time he could not wonder that apprehensions with respect to Ultramontane influence should enter into the minds of the British public whenever legislation affecting the position of Roman Catholics in Ireland was projected; and the House could not be surprised that the influences which prevailed within the Roman communion should be regarded by a very great portion of the people of this country with aversion, and by some portion of them even with unnecessary dread. 'It appears to us, however,' continued the speaker, 'that we have one course, and one course only to take, one decision and one only to arrive at, with respect to our Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. Do we intend, or do we not intend, to extend to them the full benefit of civil equality on a footing exactly the same as that on which it is granted to members of other religious persuasions? If we do not, the conclusion is a most grave one; but, if the House be of opinion, as the Government are of opinion, that it is neither generous nor politic, whatever we may think of this ecclesiastical influence within the Roman Church, to draw distinctions, in matters purely civil, adverse to our Roman Catholic

fellow-countrymen—if we hold that opinion, let us hold it frankly and boldly; and, having determined to grant measures of equality as far as it may be in our power to do so, do not let us attempt to stint our action in that sense when we come to the execution of that which we have announced to be our design.' Mr. Gladstone next examined the alternatives which had been offered to the Government or imputed to them, and declared that with regard to denominational endowment, they were not only precluded from proposing it by their own pledges, but by a sincere belief that it would be unwise. The 'Supplemental Charter' scheme had entirely gone by, and was not equal to the present emergency, and to set up another university by the side of the Dublin University and the Queen's University would be no settlement of the question. Defining the principles on which the Government had decided to act, the right hon. gentleman started from the proposition that the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from university education in Ireland constituted a religious grievance—a civil disability, imposed for religious opinions. That both Roman Catholics and Presbyterians were debarred from the benefits of university education by their unwillingness to send their children to places where religion was not taught on authority as part of the system of training was a fact which, however some might deplore it, must be dealt with as a fact that could not be altered. In proof of this Mr. Gladstone quoted returns showing that there were only 145 Roman Catholic students in Arts at the Dublin and Queen's Universities—a state of things

which he described as miserably and scandalously bad. Again, the total number of students in Arts in Ireland was 1,179. So that the Roman Catholics—with more than two-thirds, nearly three-fourths in fact, of the population—supplied only an eighth part of the students in Arts. He therefore considered that he had shown there was a great religious grievance in Ireland. Had he been able to point to a state of things in which the movement was in the other direction—in which, instead of an almost constant decrease of Roman Catholic attendance at the Queen's Colleges, there was a steady, healthy, and progressive increase—the case would have been greatly different. Quitting the topic of the religious grievance, Mr. Gladstone stated, from the most recent statistics, that the whole number of university students in Ireland amounted to the very poor and scanty figure of 1,634, of whom less than one-half were university students in the English or in the Scottish sense of the word. Of students in that sense in Ireland there were but 784, against 4,000 whom Scotland, with not much more than half the population, sent to her universities. That was a pretty strong case as regarded the absolute supply of university and academic training in Ireland. But the case was stronger still when they considered the comparative state of the academical supply. Figures demonstrated that notwithstanding the efforts of Parliament, notwithstanding the general increase of education, notwithstanding the opening of Queen's Colleges with large endowments, the university students of Ireland in the proper sense—that is, the students in

Arts—were fewer at that moment than they were forty years before, when no Queen's Colleges were in existence. At that moment, the students in Arts in Ireland, even including men who were merely examined and who did not attend lectures, only numbered—as he had already remarked—1,179; while in 1832 the students in Arts at Trinity College alone numbered 1,461.

Coming to the second cause of the demand for academical reform, Mr. Gladstone dwelt upon the anomalous position of the university, and the strange inversion of the relations between it and Trinity College. After a long retrospect of the history of the university, he drew the conclusion that by its original design it was always intended to include several colleges—and that, in fact, various colleges had from time to time existed, although none had survived but Trinity College. He therefore based the main principle of his bill on this historical conclusion—that the University of Dublin—as distinct from Trinity College—was the ancient historical University of Ireland, and that within its precincts should be effected the academical reform which was needed. There was also a collateral proposition which he had to mention, viz., that the Queen's Colleges of Belfast and Cork would be retained, that the Galway College would be wound up by 1876, and that it would be proposed to merge the Queen's University into Dublin University. On this last point, however, the Government were not unwilling to defer to the judgment of the House. The principles which had been already applied to the reform of the English universities dis-

tinguished the present bill—that is to say, tests would be abolished, the university emancipated from the colleges, members would be introduced into the university not belonging to any of the colleges, and the colleges would be taxed for the benefit of the university. There were some points on which it would be necessary to depart from the English precedent—for example, a limit must be placed on academical teaching; and for a time, at least, the governing body must be subjected to the action of the Crown and Parliament. The bill contemplated three periods. On January 1st, 1875, the powers exercised by the Provost and the seven Senior Fellows of Trinity College in relation to the university, would be handed over to the new governing body; then would follow a provisional period, during which certain special arrangements would prevail; and after 1885, when the new system had been fully developed, the permanent rules would come into force. With regard to the changes to be made in the existing position of the university, first of all the University of Dublin would be incorporated, which it had never been yet; the Theological Faculty would be separated from Trinity College and handed over to the Representative Body of the Disestablished Church, with compensation for vested interests and a charge for its maintenance. The Chancellor would be appointed by the Crown, and would retain his present function of Visitor of Trinity College; and the Vice-Chancellor would be elected by the governing body. The Queen's Colleges of Cork and Belfast, the Roman Catholic University, and the Magee College

would become colleges of the university; as would probably other institutions also. With regard to the very important change in the constitution of the new governing body of the University of Dublin, Mr. Gladstone stated that there would be, in the first place, twenty-eight ordinary members, to be nominated in the Act, all vacancies to be filled alternately by the Crown and by co-optation during the preliminary period of ten years, and afterwards four members would retire annually—one successor to be filled up by the Crown, one by the council, one by the professors, and one by the senate. In addition to these ordinary members, every college which had fifty students *in statu pupillari* matriculated in the university, would be allowed to elect one member of council, and each college which had 150 such students, might elect two members. The senate would consist of all Doctors and Masters of Arts who kept their names on the books, and would include both those now qualified in Dublin and the Queen's University; with special powers during the first three years after 1875, for the admission of persons who had resided for a sufficiently long time in the other colleges. The new university would be a teaching as well as an examining body, and in describing the securities for conscience which would be taken, the Premier said there would be no chairs in theology, moral philosophy, or in modern history. With regard to the two latter subjects, no student would be examined in them against his will, and these subjects would be completely excluded from examinations for emoluments. The main security for the

rights of conscience, on which the Government relied, was such a representation of all parties, within moderate and safe limits, in the body of the council, as could be usefully and beneficially introduced into its constitution.

The next and the last of the difficult subjects Mr. Gladstone had to lay before the House was that concerned with the financial arrangements of this comprehensive scheme. The general result of his investigations was, that from the present revenues of Trinity College would be taken the cost of providing for vested interests, and a contribution of £12,000 a year to the new university. This would still leave Trinity, he observed, the richest college in Christendom; and for its consolation, he added that in all probability it would be necessary to apply the same treatment to some of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge when the commission then prosecuting its inquiries had reported. The Premier estimated the expenses of the extended university at £50,000: viz., £25,000 for the encouragement of learning, thus divided:—ten fellowships annually of £200 each, tenable for five years; twenty-five exhibitions annually of £50, and one hundred bursaries annually of £25 each, tenable for four years; £20,000 a year for the staff of professors; and £5,000 for examinations, buildings, and general expenses. It was proposed to provide this sum as follows:—£12,000 by Trinity College, £10,000 from the Consolidated Fund, £5,000 from fees, and the remainder from the surplus of the ecclesiastical property of Ireland. Mr. Gladstone further mentioned that powers would be given to

Trinity College to form a scheme for its own self-government. The other colleges, also, would have the same powers; and as to the preponderance of lay or ecclesiastical influence in them, each must settle that for itself; all that the Legislature could do was to give them an open career and fair play. The Premier paid a warm tribute to Trinity College, and expressed a hope that for generations and for ages it would continue to dispense more unrestrainedly than ever the blessings of a liberal culture. He also indicated additional advantages which the college would possess under the new *régime*. As regarded the voluntary colleges, they would enjoy an entire freedom of internal government. Remarking upon the important, he might almost say—from the many classes it concerned and the many topics it involved—the solemn nature of his subject, Mr. Gladstone thus concluded his lengthened address :—

'We have not spared labour and application in the preparation of this certainly complicated, and, I venture to hope, also, comprehensive plan. We have sought to provide a complete remedy for what we thought, and for what we have long marked and held up to public attention as a palpable grievance—a grievance of conscience. But we have not thought that, in removing that grievance, we were discharging either the whole or the main part of our duty. It is one thing to clear obstructions from the ground; it is another to raise the fabric. And the fabric which we seek to raise is a substantive, organised system, under which all the sons of Ireland, be their professions, be their opinions what they may, may freely meet in their own ancient, noble, historic university for the advancement of learning in that country. The removal of grievance is the negative portion of the project; the substantive and positive part of it, academic reform. We do not ask the House to embark upon a scheme which can be described as one of mere innovation. We ask you now to give to Ireland that which has long been desired, which has been often attempted, but which has never been attained; and we ask you to give it to Ireland,

founding the measure upon the principles on which you have already acted in the universities of England. We commit the plan to the prudence and the patriotism of this House, which we have so often experienced, and in which the country places, as we well know, an entire confidence. I will not lay stress upon the evils which will flow from its failure, from its rejection, in prolonging and embittering the controversies which have for many, for too many years been suffered to exist. I would rather dwell upon a more pleasing prospect—upon my hope, even upon my belief, that this plan in its essential features may meet with the approval of the House and of the country. At any rate, I am convinced that if it be your pleasure to adopt it, you will by its means enable Irishmen to raise their country to a height in the sphere of human culture, such as will be worthy of the genius of the people, and such as may, perhaps, emulate those oldest, and possibly best, traditions of her history upon which Ireland still so fondly dwells.'

It was scarcely to be expected that the leaders of the Opposition would be prepared to discuss proposals of such magnitude immediately upon their introduction; and Mr. Disraeli asked—as in the case of the Irish Church Act—that a period of three weeks might elapse before the second reading of the bill. Mr. Gladstone consented to fix the second reading for the 3rd of March. Meanwhile, the House and the country had leisure to digest the provisions of the scheme. In the outset, it seemed as though the bill would please all those parties whom the Ministry had chiefly in view in its construction. But this hope speedily gave way to an opposite feeling, and it became evident before many days had elapsed that an amicable settlement of university education in Ireland was as far off as ever. The Roman Catholic bishops strongly denounced the measure, and, while not unprepared to take what it offered, left it to be sufficiently understood that they claimed much more. The advanced Liberals also

passed an adverse judgment upon the bill. Objection was likewise strongly taken to the exclusion of mental and moral science from the course of study. The appointment of the ordinary members of the council was another important matter, and as the Government did not state the names of these members, the scheme encountered the hostility of the Protestant-Conservative section of the House. Irish members whom it was thought the bill would conciliate were its chief opponents when it came on for discussion; and the chorus of disapproval showed the Ministerial scheme to be in danger.

In moving the second reading, Mr. Gladstone did not remain content with formally rising for that purpose, but availed himself of the opportunity offered for correcting some of the prejudices created against the bill. He announced, however, several minor changes which he proposed to make. Accepting the suggestion made by Queen's College, Cork, the power of affiliating new colleges would be vested in the Crown, acting on the inquiries and recommendations of the governing body. As to the alleged insufficient provision for vested interests, the speaker had no doubt the House would be disposed to act liberally, both as to money and status. Changes would be introduced into the definition of persons *in statu pupillari*, and also in the powers of the council to divide students in Arts into different branches for the purposes of examination. Anticipating the amendment to be moved by Mr. Bourke, Mr. Gladstone admitted that the anxiety of the House to learn the constitution of the governing

body was excusable, but what the hon. member asked was impossible. He pointed out that it was contrary to all precedents—to the course taken on the English University Bills, on the Reform Bill of 1867, and the Irish Church Bill of 1870. It was the desire of the Government to select men of the greatest weight to serve on the council, without reference to their political opinions or the course they might have taken in regard to this bill; but it would be impossible to ask such men to undertake the duty until the bill had made some way in committee. And it was obvious that if they were willing to serve before they knew what shape the bill would take they would not be fit for the position. 'Are we to be told,' demanded the Premier, 'that the House of Commons is to be asked to pass a vote of censure on the Government for not having attempted what it would be ridiculous to attempt and impossible to form? That such a vote of censure would be passed I am not going to assume, but that such a vote should be asked for is worthy of commemoration in the annals of Parliament.'

The opposition to the bill, as already intimated, was remarkable both for the diverse politics of the speakers, and the arguments they advanced against the Ministerial scheme. Many of the strong points of Mr. Gladstone's case, however, were left untouched. Mr. Bourke having moved his amendment expressing the regret of the House that the Government had not stated to the House the names of the twenty-eight ordinary members of the council, Lord E. Fitzmaurice

seconded the resolution, strongly condemning the 'gagging clauses,' and maintaining that the bill would destroy Protestant separate education, and the mixed system of education, in order ultimately to give the Roman Catholics the monoply of a second-rate article. Mr. C. E. Lewis combated the arithmetical arguments upon which Mr. Gladstone had built up his measure, and the O'Donoghue opposed the bill, not for the benefits which it conferred on Episcopalians and Presbyterians, but because it did nothing for the Roman Catholics. The latter would be content with nothing but a separate Catholic university. Lord R. Montagu said that the majority of the people of Ireland would continue to agitate for denominational education until Parliament complied with their demands, and Sir M. Hicks Beach remarked that though he was not particularly friendly to Mr. Fawcett's bill, he preferred that settlement of the question to this. Mr. Fawcett, however, pronounced the strongest condemnation of the scheme, in language sometimes open to animadversion. He maintained that it would make the condition of university education in Ireland more unsatisfactory than ever, and would create worse evils than those with which it was meant to deal. It was a mere compromise intended to please everybody but which pleased nobody. He entered an emphatic protest against the abolition of the Queen's University and the Galway College, took exception to the constitution of the governing body, and denounced the 'gagging clauses,' and the degrading censorship of professorial teaching which

they involved. The bill would lead to no other conclusion but the establishment of denominational education in Ireland, and he hoped the House would reject it on its merits without reference to the collateral issue of a Ministerial crisis.

On the first night of the discussion, the only speakers in defence of the Government University scheme were the Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Osborne Morgan; and upon the resumption of the debate, Mr. Horsman created some astonishment by delivering a clever but bitter diatribe against the bill, which he had at first welcomed as a settlement of the question. He alleged in justification of this change of opinion the demands of the Roman Catholic Bishops, and asked, 'Why does not the Government withdraw the bill? Nobody wants it—nobody accepts it—it settles nothing, but unsettles everybody. Had any English or Scotch member ever gone through the hypocrisy of proposing to feel confidence in the Government on this question? To ask for such a vote was a piece of effrontery worthy of a cartoon in *Punch*.' Such a vote, continued the right hon. gentleman, would be regarded by the country as a vote of confidence in Cardinal Cullen and the priests. The measure was defended by Mr. Chichester Fortescue, and opposed, in able speeches, by Dr. Playfair and Mr. Gathorne Hardy.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, nevertheless, came to the support of the Ministerial scheme in an address, which, for the moment, seemed as though it would do much to retrieve the fortunes of the Government.

Remarking with respect to the 'gagging clauses,' that they were not of the essence of the bill, Mr. Lowe showed that their meaning had been entirely misapprehended. A number of objections urged against the essential principle of the measure arose from the ambiguous use of the words 'university' and 'college.' While 'college' only implied teaching provision, 'university,' as well as teaching, implied the power of giving degrees, and he maintained, therefore, that while colleges could not be over-multiplied, a university ought to have as nearly as possible a monopoly. He justified the scheme of the bill on this ground—the collection of a number of colleges under a single university. The present necessity for legislation arose from three causes: the imperfect constitution of Trinity College, the insufficient education given at the Queen's Colleges, and the refusal of the Roman Catholic Bishops to allow their youth to seek a degree either at Trinity College or the Queen's Colleges. He expressed his regret that the Roman Catholic Bishops had signified their disapproval of the bill, but that event must be treated as an earthquake, or any other natural calamity which could not be helped. While admitting that the Government had met with more hostile criticism than they anticipated, he nevertheless maintained that this bill was the only means of applying a real remedy to the grievance.*

* The happiest passage in Mr. Lowe's speech was its conclusion, in which, amid continuous cheers and laughter, he retorted thus effectively upon Mr. Horsman:—'There are Abdiels who will not leave their friends. There is one member of the House whose sympathy with us I

The fact that the Government were willing to give up the 'gagging clauses,' combined with the admission that they had never intended to sanction the wholesale affiliation of diocesan colleges, afforded a momentary but delusive hope that the measure might ultimately weather the storm.

Sir W. Harcourt, who spoke on the third night of the discussion, supported the bill, though he was far

feel unequal to express, and would, therefore, for that purpose, take the liberty of resorting to the words of a bard of Erin:—

> "Come rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
> Though the herd have all fled thy home is still here;
> Here still is a smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
> And a hand and a heart thine own to the last."

The House will see that I am not too high-flown in the panegyric I give, when I read a brief extract from this letter:—"Mr. Gladstone has introduced a measure of university education that does him great honour, and when perfected by amendment in committee, and it takes its place on the Statute Book, it will be a noble crowning to the work of the present Parliament. We must all resume its consideration with an earnest desire to acknowledge the large and generous spirit with which the Government has addressed itself to the subject, and co-operate with the high purposes it has in view; and as the erroneous impression conveyed by Mr. Gladstone's allusion to Sir Robert Inglis and the Pope could not pass without notice, I have written this letter with a view of getting it out of the way before we come to the real business."' Mr. Horsman—'What is the date of that letter?' 'The date is 7, Richmond Terrace, Feb. 15, and it is signed "Edward Horsman." I have read the House the letter, and in the early part of the evening they have been furnished with the comment. And now I will say this—Whatever faults you may find with this bill, I believe it will be recognised by the country as an attempt to deal thoroughly with what appears to me to be a great and a crying evil, and one which ought no longer to be allowed to exist. We have encountered a great deal of opposition, and shall, no doubt, have to encounter still more; but I am very much mistaken if behind this storm we do not receive an acknowledgment from the people of these islands of the honesty and fairness of the intention of this bill—an acknowledgment which will brush aside all captious criticism, and help to make it, in the language of my right hon. friend the member for Liskeard, "the crowning work of the present Parliament."'

from admitting that it was a successful specimen of legislating according to Irish ideas. Dr. Ball vigorously attacked the measure, and Mr. Bernal Osborne expressed his surprise that a Cabinet with eight double first-class Oxford men in it could have so blundered in a matter of education. Mr. Cardwell said that all the points which had been objected to were open for discussion in committee, and there was nothing to bind the House to abide by the bill as it stood.

This admission had the unfortunate effect of damaging instead of aiding the cause of the Government. While it alienated the Ultramontane interest, it failed to conciliate the wavering allegiance of the discontented Liberals. The close of the debate was therefore looked forward to with augmented interest. On the fourth night, about half-past ten, Mr. Disraeli rose and delivered a speech which, in some parts, was unusually brilliant, but equally irrelevant. Although they had been assured, he said, that those points which were not of 'the essence of the bill' were dead, and Mr. Cardwell had spoken in the direction of surrender, Mr. Gladstone had disclaimed this meaning, and declared that the only concession was that these points should be fully discussed. Having no proof, therefore, that the Government had withdrawn any of the clauses, he (Mr. Disraeli) would discuss the bill on its merits. First, he objected to it because it proposed to institute a university that was not universal. He also objected strongly to the transfer of the Theological Faculty to the disestablished Church, and as to the proposed ex-

clusion of mental and moral philosophy and modern history, it was an astounding proposal to come from the leader of the Liberal party at this day. The speaker next demanded some information upon the composition of the 'despotic and anonymous council,' and observed that, arguing from previous experience, it would be like the House of Commons, and would consist of two well-organised parties arrayed against each other, with a few trimmers inclining the balance. Discussing the situation of the Roman Catholics, Mr. Disraeli said he pitied their position, but it was their own doing. His own Government had entered into negotiations with the Roman Catholic bishops, and while vindicating the principle of concurrent endowment, the House knew that it was held to be dead. Mr. Gladstone had capped his negotiations with the policy of confiscation. The Roman Catholics fell into the trap, and lost sight of university education in the prospect of destroying a Protestant Church. But the country had had enough of this policy of confiscation, and he hoped that that night's vote would show that it was suffering the inconveniences of satiety. He had no desire to disturb the Premier, but he should vote against the bill, believing it to be monstrous in its principle, pernicious in many of its details, and utterly futile as a measure of practical legislation.

Before the vehement cheering on the Opposition benches had subsided, Mr. Gladstone had risen to reply to Mr. Disraeli, and wind up the debate. In the opening of his speech the Premier drew forth prolonged

applause from his supporters by calling upon the House to note that, though the leader of the Opposition had declared concurrent endowment to be dead, it yet lived in his mind, and might revive under his magical touch. After explaining that the attitude of the Government on this question was not due to any words of his, and deprecating the introduction of religious heat and party temper into its discussion, he repeated once more the grounds on which the measure had been introduced, viz., the grievance of the Roman Catholics, and the necessity for academic reform in Ireland. The history of the bill had some dramatic features; it had suffered a catastrophe; on its introduction all the 'waiters on providence' in London were in favour of it, but now not an individual of the species had a word to say for it. The question, however, was, Should the House go into committee on the bill? In deciding that, the House ought to have no other motive but to endeavour to do that now which a few years hence it would regret it had not done. He denied that the bill would lower the standard of education, and reminded the House that the London University—a mere examining body—had certainly raised education. They had been told the bill should be given up on account of the opposition in Ireland; but that opposition had been most inaccurately stated in the House. Yet even if the opposition had not been exaggerated and misrepresented, in dealing with a measure like this it would be impolitic and unparliamentary on that account to withdraw the bill before it had been considered in committee. The

general effect of the speech of Mr. Cardwell—with which he entirely agreed—was to show that it was a wise course in a question of this character, where it was difficult to retrieve ground once lost, to go into committee, to compare their several notions and demands at close quarters, and to see what they could effect towards bringing them into harmony. Mr. Gladstone then cited—against Mr. Disraeli's condemnation of going into committee on the ground that a measure came out substantially the same—the precedent set by the right hon. gentleman himself as regarded the Reform Bill of 1867. The history of that bill in committee had its lessons. Referring to the banishment of ethics and modern history from the *curriculum*, and the introduction of collegiate members into the council, the Government would not adhere to them, and there were also other points upon which they would meet the House on equal terms. Any amendments which were real improvements would be welcomed, and even those which were not improvements would be welcomed if deemed of importance by the House, and if they did not touch the vitality of the bill. As to the actual vital principle of the bill, it was this—there must be a complete removal of the admitted religious grievance by opening degrees under an impartial and unsectarian authority to men of all opinions, whether educated under the mixed or separate system. The university must be relieved from the monopoly of Trinity College, and must have an independent governing body and a competent endowment; and the faculty of theology must

be separated from it. Mr. Gladstone next proceeded to condemn the principle of concurrent endowment, observing that he wished to leave on record the strong conviction he entertained that it would be a grave and serious error on the part of the House were they to give the slightest encouragement to the demand that was made for introducing into Ireland the system of separate endowment for separate religious institutions for academic purposes, and thereby to distinctly renounce and repudiate the policy of 1869, to which the great majority of that House were parties. Having alluded to the concord which had for the moment been established between the Conservatives and the Roman Catholics, and further entreating the House to remove the grievance rather than follow Mr. Disraeli's alternative of withdrawing from the task, Mr. Gladstone thus concluded his powerful speech :—

'For the House, for us all, for the country, I ask what is to be the policy that is to follow the rejection of this bill? What is to be the policy adopted in Ireland? Perhaps the bill of my hon. friend the member for Brighton will find favour, which leaves the University of Dublin in the hands of Trinity College, and which, I presume, if passed, will only be the harbinger of an agitation fiercer still than that which we are told would follow the passing of the present bill. It will still leave the Roman Catholic in this condition, that he will not be able to obtain a degree in Ireland without going either to the Queen's College, to which he objects, or placing himself under examinations and a system of discipline managed and conducted by a Protestant board—a board composed of eight gentlemen, of whom six are clergymen of the disestablished Church of Ireland. The other alternative will be the adopting for Ireland of a new set of principles, which Parliament has repudiated in Ireland and has disclaimed for Great Britain, not only treating the Roman Catholic majority in Ireland as being the Irish nation, but likewise adopting for that Irish nation the principles which we have ourselves overthrown even within the limits of our own generation. I know not with what satisfaction we can

look forward to these prospects. It is dangerous to tamper with objects of this kind. We have presented to you our plan, for which we are responsible. We are not afraid, I am not afraid, of the charge of my right hon. friend that we have served the priests. (Mr. Horsman: I did not say so.) I am glad to hear it. I am ready to serve the priests or any other man as far as justice dictates. I am not ready to go an inch further for them or for any other man; and if the labours of 1869 and 1870 are to be forgotten in Ireland—if where we have earnestly sought and toiled for peace we find only contention—if our tenders of relief are thrust aside with scorn—let us still remember that there is a voice which is not heard in the crackling of the fire, or in the roaring of the whirlwind or the storm, but which will and must be heard when they have passed away—the still small voice of justice. To mete out justice to Ireland, according to the best view that with human infirmity we could form, has been the work, I will almost say the sacred work, of this Parliament. Having put our hand to the plough, let us not turn back. Let not what we think the fault or perverseness of those whom we are attempting to assist have the slightest effect in turning us even by a hair's-breadth from the path on which we have entered. As we have begun, so let us persevere even to the end, and with firm and resolute hand let us efface from the law and the practice of the country, the last—for I believe it is the last—of the religious and social grievances of Ireland.'

The amendment having been negatived, a division was taken upon the main question, that the bill be read a second time. A scene of great excitement ensued when, upon the return of the tellers, the clerk at the table handed the paper to Colonel Taylor, the Conservative whip. The tellers approached the table, and comparative quiet having been restored, the numbers were declared as follows:—For the bill, 284; against, 287—majority against the Government, 3. Thirty-five Irish, eight English, and two Scotch Liberal members voted against the Government, while eighteen Liberals were absent, and eighteen paired.

The Government did not, of course, count upon this defeat of their measure, and were quite justified in

the hope that the House would support them in removing the last of the great grievances of the Irish people. Some years after the defeat of his scheme, the ex-Premier was questioned as to whether he was really surprised at the rejection of the Irish University Bill, or whether he dealt with the subject as a matter of duty, knowing that he risked almost all that followed. The right hon. gentleman replied, that considering the extremely favourable reception which the bill met with in the outset, he was most emphatically astonished at its ultimate fate. He had been most anxious to dispose of this vexed question of Irish University education. Had this been happily accomplished, in all probability the ex-Premier would have brought forward some other schemes of Irish legislation.

Following his specifically-declared intention, Mr. Gladstone resigned office, whereupon a peculiar difficulty arose. The Premier was unfeignedly desirous of being relieved of his onerous duties, but Mr. Disraeli, acting upon the wishes of the great bulk of his followers, declined to accept office with a majority of the House of Commons against him. Some days later, Mr. Gladstone made a statement in the House of Commons to the effect that he and his colleagues had consented to resume their positions. He also explained the nature of the transactions which had taken place in the interregnum. The Queen having requested his advice upon Mr. Disraeli's unconditional refusal to take office, he (Mr. Gladstone) submitted a statement to her Majesty. That was made known to Mr.

Disraeli, and his reply to it was received. Perceiving from the unequivocal nature of this reply that there was no chance of a Government being formed by the party opposite, he had agreed to resume office. Referring to a difference of opinion which had arisen between himself and Mr. Disraeli upon the duties of an Opposition when it had brought about the fall of a Government, Mr. Gladstone read an extract from his letter to the Queen, in which he contended that his rival's summary refusal to accept office was contrary to precedent and Parliamentary usage. With regard to the delay which had occurred, he was not conscious of its being due to any personal reluctance to resume office, although he did feel it, and thought he had earned a right to rest so far as it could be earned by labour. That which had occurred, however, he feared would modify the relations of the Government and the Opposition in a manner not likely to contribute to the satisfactory working of our Parliamentary system. The Government would endeavour fully and honourably to discharge their duty, and nothing had transpired to shorten the existence of the present Parliament, either as touching the course of public business or the duration of time. Nothing could be more injurious than the prevalence of opinions to the contrary effect. The Government would endeavour to proceed, both with respect to legislation and administration, in the same manner and upon the same principles as those which had heretofore governed their conduct.

Mr. Disraeli then gave his version of the Ministerial

difficulty and the advice he had tendered to the Queen. His speech was in reality a manifesto to the country. He pointed out that the majority against the Government had been created by a considerable section of the Liberal party, with whom he had no bond of union. He had had experience of office under such circumstances as those which had recently arisen, and it had convinced him that such an experiment weakened authority and destroyed public confidence. He had consequently prayed her Majesty to relieve him of the task. Upon the question why he had not advised the Queen to dissolve, he remarked that although a Minister in office could perform it with great promptitude, it was not so with a Minister who had to form his Government. He might, perhaps, have been able to dissolve in May, but what could he have dissolved upon? The Irish University Bill was not sufficient, nor could a Government appeal to the country without a policy. The function of the Opposition was essentially critical, and it was totally impossible for them suddenly to have a policy matured. Mr. Disraeli next illustrated in an amusing manner the difficulties of a Government which endeavoured to carry on public business in the face of a hostile majority. After stating that the Queen had given him permission to dissolve if it would assist him, Mr. Disraeli—with a view of showing that he had exhausted all means before refusing office—read an extract from his letter to her Majesty, in which he stated he had represented to her Majesty that Mr. Gladstone had resigned on

very inadequate grounds, and that his honour having been satisfied by a resignation, his return to office was the best solution of the difficulty. Mr. Disraeli concluded by predicting for the Tory party a noble and a triumphant career, when other topics pressing to the front should become 'great and burning questions.'

Thus closed a remarkable episode in the history of Irish university education. Although much of the time of the session of 1873 was devoted to this important scheme, some measures of great value were passed. Foremost of these was Lord Selborne's Judicature Bill. Mr. Forster brought forward in the Commons a bill transferring from the school boards to the guardians of the poor the duty of determining whether the fees of indigent children should be paid out of the rates; and this bill passed. Mr. Lowe was not so successful with his financial measures as the chief of the Government had been in former years, and Mr. Gladstone came to his assistance in the debate on Mr. W. H. Smith's motion upon the subject of local taxation, which the Premier said was aimed at all indirect taxes. The resolution was negatived without a division. Mr. Fawcett carried his bill for the reform of the University of Dublin, but it was so changed as to become a simple measure for the abolition of tests. Mr. Miall's motion for the disestablishment of the Church of England was defeated by 356 to 61 votes, Mr. Gladstone delivering the most important speech against it. He said that he not only opposed the motion on its merits, but because it was ill-

timed and incapable of present discussion. The popular feeling was not favourable to the proposal, and if a general election were to occur he believed a House would be returned much less disposed to entertain the question than the existing one. Mr. Gladstone also opposed Mr. Cowper-Temple's proposal for the delivery of sermons in churches by laymen and Dissenters. The principle of extending household suffrage to counties received the personal adhesion of the Premier this session. In proposing the usual grant on the approaching marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna of Russia, Mr. Gladstone said the union would be one of affection, and expressed his trust that the day had gone by when royal personages connected with this country were required to enter into matrimonial engagements 'without the consecrating element of personal attachment, which was the solemn basis on which this union was founded.'

Several Ministerial changes of an important character occurred shortly after the close of the session. Mr. Lowe having resigned the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, Mr. Gladstone took up the duties himself, and filled the double offices of Premier and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Ripon, Mr. Childers, and Mr. Baxter retired from the Government, and Mr. Bright re-entered it as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Vigorous speeches in defence of the Ministerial policy were made during the recess, but the Government failed to recover its once overwhelming popularity.

CHAPTER XXII.

FALL OF MR. GLADSTONE'S MINISTRY.

Mr. Disraeli on the Policy of the Government—Reaction against the Liberal Ministry—The Premier's Manifesto to the Electors of Greenwich—Dissolution of Parliament—Reasons for the Step—A Record of distinguished Service—Mr. Gladstone's Proposals—Public Opinion on the Manifesto—Mr. Disraeli's Counter-blast—The Straits of Malacca—A Geographical Quarrel—Result of the General Election—Resignation of Mr. Gladstone—Character and Labours of his Administration.

THE autumn of 1873 was a time of strange transition in the political feeling of the country. The people clearly demonstrating that they no longer desired to keep up with the reforming zeal of the Government, Mr. Disraeli stepped in, and cleverly guided the public sentiment to the advantage of the Opposition. Writing to his 'dear Grey,' in October, he observed that 'for nearly five years the present Ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion, or by stumbling into mistakes which have been always discreditable, and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy, and seem quite proud of it; but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering.'

This strongly-exaggerated description of the Premier's policy had the effect of fanning the popular discontent. The bye-elections which had recently occurred had mostly proved substantial Conservative victories, and indications were not wanting that many Liberal members who had long endorsed Mr. Gladstone's action were falling away from him. The Bible was affirmed to be in danger; and when it came to 'beer' as well, amongst other things, the work of revolution was pronounced by many powerful classes as certainly going too far. The joint flag of 'Beer and Bible' having been hoisted, the cry against the Ministry became irresistible.

Something must be done. That which was done was an equal surprise to both political parties. The Premier—assured by the press that the people whom he had so long and so faithfully served had turned their backs upon him, and weary of the half-hearted support of his own party—resolved to take the direct judgment of the country itself upon the aspect of public affairs. Accordingly, on the 23rd of January, he issued a lengthy manifesto to the electors of Greenwich, announcing that the existing Parliament would be dissolved, and a new one summoned to meet without delay. The excitement of the people was intense when they learnt that the Parliament of 1868—the Parliament which had disestablished the Irish Church, settled the Irish land question, abolished Purchase in the Army, founded a system of National Education, and established the Ballot—was declared, as Cromwell once declared a Parliament, to be no longer a Parliament.

In the fullest and frankest manner, Mr. Gladstone—in a document entitled to rank as a State paper, from its political and historical importance—stated his reasons for what was regarded in many quarters as a political *coup d'état.* After observing that the welfare of the country can never be effectually promoted by a Government which is not invested with adequate authority, he wrote:—'In the month of March last the Government were defeated in their effort to settle upon just and enlarged principles the long-disputed question of the higher education in Ireland, if not by a combined, yet concurrent effort of the leader of the Opposition and of the Roman Catholic prelacy of Ireland. Upon suffering this defeat the Government, according to the practice of our Constitution, placed their resignation in the hands of the Sovereign. Her Majesty, in the just and wise exercise of her high office, applied to the leader of the Opposition. He, however, declaring that he was not prepared with a policy, and could not govern in the existing Parliament, declined to fill the void which he had made. Under these circumstances, we thought ourselves bound by loyalty to the Queen not to decline the resumption of our offices. But this step we took with an avowed reluctance. We felt that, in consequence of what had happened, both the Crown and country were placed at a disadvantage, as it was established that, during the existence of the present Parliament, one party only could govern, and must, therefore, govern without appeal. We also felt that a precedent had been set, which both diminished

our strength and weakened the general guarantees for the responsibility and integrity of Parliamentary opposition. Of this diminution of strength we were painfully and sensibly reminded during the session by the summary and rapid dismissal, in the House of Lords, of measures which had cost much time and labour to the House of Commons. But we remembered that in the years 1868 and 1870, when the mind of the country was unambiguously expressed, the House of Lords had, much to its honour, deferred to that expression upon matters of great moment; and I cannot doubt that it would have continued in this course had the isolated and less certain, but still frequent and fresh, indications of public opinion at single elections continued to be in harmony with the powerful and authentic, but now more remote, judgment of 1868.'

This state of things not having improved, however, during the latter part of the recess, the Administration desired to pass from a condition thus fitful and casual, to one in which the nation would have full opportunity of expressing its will and choice as between the two political parties. The Government of the day, whatever it might be, would thus be armed with the just means of authority. Mr. Gladstone next reviewed the measures of his Ministry, and claimed a renewal of confidence. He promised a diminution of local taxation and the total repeal of the income-tax, for which the surplus of upwards of four millions which he would have to show would afford justification. He observed that the income-tax had been borne with exemplary patience,

mainly on the ground of the great work of liberation which had been achieved by its aid. But no Government had ever been able to make it perpetual. The proceeds of the income-tax for the present year were expected to be between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000, and at a sacrifice for the financial year of something less than £5,500,000, the country might enjoy the advantage and relief of its total repeal. He declared that this advantage was in present circumstances practicable, but added that it was manifest they ought not to aid the rates, and remove the income-tax, without giving to the general consumer, and giving him simultaneously, some marked relief in the class of articles of popular consumption.

The Premier next pointed out that the changes indicated would dispose of considerably more than the surplus named, but there was nothing to preclude the Government from asking Parliament to consider, in conjunction with those great remissions, what moderate assistance could be had from judicious adjustments of existing taxes. Pointing to his own declarations of 1868, he affirmed that he could not belong to a Government which did not on every occasion seek to enlarge its resources by a wise economy. As some earnest of his sincerity in this matter he added, 'The policy of the Government for the last five years in particular, the character and opinions of my colleagues, and the financial and commercial legislation with which I may say that, since 1842, I have been associated, are before you.' In concluding, Mr. Gladstone

referred to the charge sometimes made that the Liberal Government and party had endangered the institutions and worried all the interests of the country. As to the interests, he was aware of no one that had been injured, and if unhappily they had offended any, it was not their intention or wish, but in consequence of their anxiety to consult the highest interest of all—the interest of the nation. 'As to the institutions of the country, gentlemen, the charge is the very same that you have been accustomed to hear urged against Liberal Governments in general for the last forty years. It is time to test by a general survey of the past this trite and vague allegation. Now, there has elapsed a period of forty, or more exactly a period of forty-three years since the Liberal party acquired the main direction of public affairs. This followed another period of about forty years, beginning with the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, during which there had been an almost unbroken rule of their opponents, who claimed, and were reputed to be the great preservers of the institutions of the country. But I ask you to judge the men by the general results. I fear we must admit that the term of forty years of Tory rule which closed in 1830, and to which you are invited to return, left the institutions of the country weaker, ay, even in its peace and order less secure, than at the commencement of the period it had found them. I am confident that if now the present Government be dismissed from the service of their Gracious Mistress and of the country, the

Liberal party, which they represent, may at least challenge contradiction when they say that their term of forty years leaves the throne, the laws, and the institutions of the country not weaker, but stronger than it found them. Such, gentlemen, is the issue placed before you, and before the nation, for your decision. If the trust of this Administration be by the effect of the present elections virtually renewed, I, for one, will serve you, for what remains of my time, faithfully; if the confidence of the country be taken from us and handed over to others whom you may judge more worthy, I, for one, shall accept cheerfully my dismissal.' *

The leader of the Opposition lost no time in issuing a counter-blast to the Prime Minister's address. On the

* The opinions of the press upon Mr. Gladstone's Address of course varied in tone. The *Times* wrote:—'The Prime Minister descends upon Greenwich amid a shower of gold, and must needs prove as irresistible as the Father of the Gods. The benefits he proposes to confer upon the taxpayers of the country will seem to them miraculous, as they will feel at first some difficulty in understanding how so much relief from taxation can be got out of even £5,000,000. Upon this head, however, they will reassure themselves by remembering that few venture to assail Mr. Gladstone's arithmetic, and even if it should prove necessary, as Mr. Gladstone hints, that some moderate assistance to the revenue, through judicious adjustments of existing taxes, should accompany these great remissions, there must still be a vast balance of relief in their favour. . . The issue is before the country, and Mr. Gladstone is to be approved for no longer delaying it.' The *Daily News* said:—'Here is a full and attractive programme of Liberal policy. The Liberal party are, in fact, invited to open a fresh chapter of their history. . . . Whatever may be said of the time or manner of the dissolution, it is, beyond all dispute, a policy to awaken—or, if anybody will have it so, to revive—the enthusiasm of the Liberal party, and to benefit the country.' 'Mr. Gladstone,' said the *Standard*, 'probably finds that he could not meet the present Parliament, for all his nominal majority, without sustaining an immediate and decisive defeat. . . . We

very day upon which the document which we have just summarised appeared, Mr. Disraeli indited an epistle to the electors of Buckinghamshire. Its phraseology, if in

have condemned, as the country will condemn, a policy which must be described as one of surprise and intrigue.' The *Daily Telegraph* thus expressed itself :—'It is an admirable record of success, and it will remain for others to celebrate his share in the work. The country will not forget that share when it pronounces judgment in the present House of Commons on the Liberal party. Mr. Gladstone has given it the materials for a mature verdict. But the all-important necessity is that the House of Commons should again be brought into harmony with the country, and be endowed with new vigour. . . If the nation should express its trust in Mr. Gladstone, he will be able to proceed with the great financial work in hand as vigorously as he did when he took office at the head of a great majority in 1868.' The *Morning Post* remarked that, 'Taken altogether in its general bearings, it must be allowed that the address to the electors of Greenwich is a very able apology for the Administration, and does great credit by the boldness of its language, if not by its lavish bids for support, to the statesman who penned it. Whether it will stand analysis remains to be seen.' The *Pall Mall Gazette* took the following view of the Premier's appeal for a renewal of confidence:—'The authority which he wants and openly asks for is a personal authority, renewed and confirmed by a *plébiscite*. "Unambiguously express your opinions once more, or, in other words, make me again personally supreme and paramount over the other branch of the Legislature. Make me again the absolute ruler I was five years ago, confirm the powerful and authentic, but now more remote judgment of 1868, and I in return will remit you the income-tax, lighten your local burdens, and free your breakfast tables." Such is the offer; and, whatever we think of its terms or its morality, its candour is undeniable.' 'The issue upon which attention must be concentrated,' contended the *Globe*, 'is that upon which lies the appeal to the country. . . Accepting Mr. Gladstone's account of the situation, we deem it the most humiliating a Prime Minister could voluntarily assume; and while we appreciate the wisdom of his appeal to hope instead of gratitude, we have little doubt the country will discount his draft on its confidence on the terms he has himself established, as only reasonable and only safe.' The *Echo* observed that, 'Whatever difference of opinion may agitate the country for the next few weeks, we are confident there will be but one as regards the illustrious statesman whose address we are now considering. No one of his opponents will advocate

some parts brusque, was undoubtedly clever. This brief definition, nevertheless, exhausts its merits. Commencing with a reference to the dissolution, he said, 'Whether this step has been taken as a means of avoiding the humbling confession by the Prime Minister that he has, in a fresh violation of constitutional law,

the repeal of any one of the great measures by which his Administration has been signalised, while his supporters will remember that no other five years have been equally fruitful in wise, just, and beneficial legislation.' Coming to the weekly journals, we find the *Saturday Review* opposed to the spirit of the manifesto. 'The Liberal party has done great things in the last forty years, and some of the greatest have been done since Mr. Gladstone has been Prime Minister. But although we may honour statesmen for what they have done in the past, we are obliged to judge their present policy by its own special character, and it is difficult to see anything in this sudden dissolution, and in Mr. Gladstone's bargaining for the price of a financial secret, which raises the reputation of the Liberal party, or adds to the benefits it has conferred on the country.' The *Spectator* was more just in its view as to the rights of a statesman at a critical moment to appeal to a long record of distinguished services, and more generous in its recognition of those services. 'No sincere Liberal will doubt that Mr. Gladstone's appeal to the people of England ought to meet with a cordial and grateful response. This Government has been distinguished above all other Liberal Governments for the honesty and earnestness with which it has redeemed its pledges, instead of using them mainly as baits to catch votes. It has been a steady and an upright, and a Liberal Government, not a Conservative Government with a Liberal name, and has done more to gain for the people of the United Kingdom some addition to that stock of human happiness which, as Mr. Gladstone as truly as pathetically says, is never too abundant, than any Government of the present generation. The genuine Liberals, who see its shortcomings best, will also see best its immeasurable superiority to anything likely to replace it.' The *Examiner* took the advanced Radical view, and cared little whether Mr. Gladstone was accepted or rejected at Greenwich, or whether he or Mr. Disraeli came into power. The *Nonconformist*, while exhorting Nonconformists throughout the country to close up their ranks and to act upon the maxim 'Measures, not men,' observed of the Government, 'We have nothing to say against their being upheld. They are very much to be preferred to any Conservative Government of which we can conceive.'

persisted in retaining for several months a seat to which he was no longer entitled, or has been resorted to by his Government in order to postpone or evade the day of reckoning for a war carried on without communication with Parliament, and the expenditure for which Parliament has not sanctioned, it is unnecessary to consider.' The right hon. gentleman then described the Prime Minister's address as 'a prolix narrative, in which he mentions many of the questions that have occupied, or may occupy, public attention, but in which I find nothing definite as to the policy he would pursue except this, that, having the prospect of a large surplus, he will, if retained in power, devote that surplus to the remission of taxation, which would be the course of any party or any Ministry.' Mr. Disraeli next declared that he had always endeavoured, and would continue to endeavour, to propose or support all measures calculated to improve the condition of the people; but he did not think this great end could be attained by incessant and harassing legislation. 'By an act of folly or of ignoance rarely equalled,' he continued, 'the present Ministry relinquished a treaty which secured us the freedom of the Straits of Malacca for our trade with China and Japan, and they at the same time entering, on the West Coast of Africa, into those equivocal and entangling engagements, which the Prime Minister now deprecates, involved us in the Ashantee War. The honour of the country now requires that we should prosecute that war with a vigour necessary to ensure success; but, when that honour is vindicated, it will be

the duty of Parliament to inquire by what means we were led into a costly and destructive contest, which neither the Parliament nor the country have sanctioned, and of the necessity or justice of which, in its origin, they have not been made aware.'* Mr. Disraeli, in concluding an address whose flippancy contrasted strangely with the dignity and gravity of that of his rival, pronounced against the extension of household suffrage to the counties, criticised adversely the more prominent features of Mr. Gladstone's policy, and assured the electors that, if again returned, he would resist every proposal which might impair the strength and stability of England.

Parliament was dissolved on the 26th of January, and the new House was summoned to meet on the 5th of March. The electioneering campaign at once began in earnest. Mr. Gladstone's general adherence to the principles of the educational policy pursued during the past four years caused the Nonconformist Committee to pass a resolution declaring it to be the immediate duty of all who desired to restore union and vigour to the Liberal party, to insist that all candidates for their support should pledge themselves against the further development of the denominational system. There were many difficulties, in addition to this, in the way of Liberal union. On the 28th Mr. Gladstone met his constituents on Blackheath. After alluding to the circumstances under which the Ministry resigned in the

* With an alteration of names, these expressions of opinion may be commended to the consideration of the Administration of which their writer is now the chief.

previous March, he replied to the election address of Mr. Disraeli. He warned his hearers that when they were asked to divert their attention from domestic affairs to foreign policy, they were called upon to run away from what they had the power of comprehending, to discuss that which was extremely difficult adequately to study and comprehend. The Premier then defended those points of the foreign policy of the Government which had been attacked, and thus took up the reference by the leader of the Opposition to the Straits of Malacca:—'Such is his poverty and destitution of points to make against the Government, although he travels all the way to the Straits of Malacca for the purpose, that he manufactures his charge out of an act which is not a bad act, but a good act, and an act which was not done by us, but done by the colleagues of Mr. Disraeli, and by the Government to which he belonged. Understand me, gentlemen, when I say it was done, I mean this: the draft of the treaty concluded by us was forwarded by Lord Derby in the month of September or August, 1868. He deserved the main credit for it, and credit—not discredit—is what is due. And so, gentlemen, I will leave the leader of the Opposition for the present floundering and foundering in the Straits of Malacca.' Mr. Gladstone then reiterated that economy and reduction of taxation were the great objects which the success of the Liberal party would secure. At the same time, he did not believe that it was in his power to serve them unless they were a united Liberal party.

At Aylesbury, on the 31st, Mr. Disraeli returned to

the charge with regard to the Straits of Malacca, affirming that the conduct of the Government over which he presided was exactly the reverse of that which the Prime Minister had alleged against them. Mr. Gladstone, however, was determined to have the last word upon the subject—save for the avalanche of geographical ignorance which descended upon the press in relation to these Straits of Malacca. Delivering the last of his eloquent election addresses at Deptford, the Premier denied that his Administration ever advised the recall of the late Lord Mayo from the Governor-Generalship of India, and then took up the Malacca question. 'The real Straits of Malacca,' he said, 'are but twenty or thirty miles broad. But no, says Mr. Disraeli, the Straits of Malacca are between Acheen and the Continent, where the sea is 150 miles wide. Mr. Disraeli—I have no doubt quite unintentionally—has fallen into a sad error, which I will endeavour to expose. The narrow part of the Straits near the Island of Sumatra is bordered by the kingdom of Siak. It was with regard to Siak I stated that Lord Malmesbury had accepted with thanks the treaty transmitted by the Dutch announcing that they had assumed the control of Siak. I stated also that the kingdom of Siak was the part of Sumatra which was important with respect to the Straits.' Mr. Gladstone next defended his Irish policy, and contended that the Land Act had removed a great scandal. He further reminded the meeting of the remaining principal achievements of the Government, and concluded by expressing his belief that the Liberal party, once

more joining hand in hand and setting shoulder to shoulder, would carry forward the banner they so long bore in hope, and which for nearly forty years they had borne on to victory, and would achieve results worthy of the past, and full of national benefit for the future.

Mr. Disraeli, speaking subsequently at Newport Pagnell, said that although he was quite as anxious as the Premier to abolish the income-tax, he yet felt there were occasions, such as a sudden war, or a reform of the tariff, when it would be necessary to have recourse to this impost. He declined to pledge himself to any specific course, either with regard to the income-tax or indirect taxation.

With these declarations of policy before them, the constituencies went to the poll; and the first General Election held under the ballot was conducted in a peaceable and creditable manner. A few riots occurred, but, on the whole, the elections passed off with orderliness and quietude. The result proved to be most disastrous to the Liberal party. Out of 652 members (the complete number of the House, six members being otherwise accounted for) the Conservatives returned 349 and the Liberals 303, thus giving the former a majority of 46 votes. The Liberals lost 95 seats and gained 39, so that their net loss was 56 seats, being equivalent to 112 votes on a division. The licensed victuallers had thrown in their interest with the Conservatives, and 'Bung' was everywhere triumphant; even Mr. Gladstone himself so far succumbed to his

influence as to occupy an inferior position upon the Greenwich poll. Other interests, acting under the belief that the Ministry were their oppressors, also declared against them. In no instance was this more conspicuous than in the case of the dockyardsmen. Greenwich, Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport, exasperated with Mr. Gladstone, and allured by the promises of friendship held out by the Conservatives, swelled the Tory reaction. The curious in such matters may readily discover what the dockyard *employés* have reaped by these changes under the new *régime*. The farmers, the licensed victuallers, the dockyardsmen, the civil service, and the Church all pronounced in favour of Mr. Disraeli, and all with expectation of immediate legislation for their benefit. The leader of the Opposition was so far grateful to the licensed victuallers that legislation was set on foot on their behalf, while the clergy were understood to be temporarily satisfied when Mr. Disraeli affirmed that the country had emphatically declared that education must be preserved upon a strictly religious basis.

As soon as the national verdict was known, Mr. Gladstone went to Windsor and tendered his resignation and that of his colleagues to the Queen. The great Liberal leader surrendered his functions after a term of office which, while not very protracted, was distinguished for wise and memorable acts of legislation. Having faithfully served his Sovereign and his country, he now made room for his successors. In stepping down from his high position—overshadowed but not

disgraced—we can find no words more appropriate in which to describe him, than those once used by Lord Beaconsfield concerning Sir Robert Peel:—'Placed in an age of rapid civilisation and rapid transition, he had adapted the practical character of his measures to the condition of the times. He had never employed his influence for factious purposes and had never been stimulated in his exertions by a disordered desire of obtaining office; above all, he had never carried himself to the opposite benches by making propositions by which he was not ready to abide.'* The only grave charge made against Mr. Gladstone as a political leader was his alleged want of tact in the management of the House of Commons. It may be that in the superabundance of other gifts, he had not all the qualities best suited to this task, but to these objectors a comparison may well be suggested between Mr. Gladstone's management of the House of Commons and that of the sessions of 1878 and 1879. Let it at once be admitted, however, that the Gladstone Ministry had its failures, which were mainly owing to the fact that the Premier's ablest lieutenants were most conspicuous for their lack of practical adaptability. What had much more to do with the failure of the Government was its misfortune in stirring up an antagonism in many of the most powerful classes of society. How

* This juster estimate of Sir Robert Peel—both in the eyes of his contemporaries and of posterity—than that which Lord Beaconsfield subsequently formed, was pronounced during the debate on the 'no confidence' motion in the Ministry, May 27th, 1841.

much of the blame attached to them, and how much to the classes against whom they were supposed to wage war, we need not attempt to determine. It was well said by a writer of the time that 'a great many people entertain towards Mr. Gladstone's Government the same sort of sentiment as that which worthy Mrs. Bertram, in Scott's romance, felt for the energetic revenue officer, who would persist in doing his duty, instead of following the example of his predecessor, who sang his song, and took his drink, and drew his salary without troubling any one.'

But the record which the Gladstone Administration has left in the Statute Book might well atone for blunders far more stupendous than those with which it was fairly chargeable. Its errors were few and trivial by comparison; its services were conspicuous and enduring. It is worthy of equal remembrance with any Ministry of the century, for in its legislation it touched higher grounds than those of mere material comfort and prosperity (though in a remarkable degree it considered these also): it satisfied the claims of conscience, and met—in so far as the time of its duration permitted—those demands of justice, in relation to Ireland, which had hitherto been ignored—demands which had been the sport of circumstances and of Governments, and for whose redress their advocates had long knocked at the doors of the British Legislature in vain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SPEECHES ON PUBLIC WORSHIP AND EDUCATION.

The new Premier—Mr. Gladstone partially retires from the Liberal Leadership—Letter to Lord Granville—Debate on the Address—Church Patronage of Scotland Bill—Opposed by Mr. Gladstone—His Speech on the Public Worship Regulation Bill—The ex-Premier's Six Resolutions—Reasons for their Withdrawal—The Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill—a retrograde Measure—Strongly attacked by Mr. Gladstone—Strange Confession of the Premier—The Bill passes in a mutilated Form—Mr. Gladstone on Education—Reply to Dr. Strauss's Work, *The Old Belief and the New*—Address to the Working Classes—Friendly Societies, Trades Unions, &c.—Facilities for intellectual Improvement—The ex-Premier at Mill Hill School—Advice to the Students—The higher Culture.

Borne into office by a strong current of public opinion, Mr. Disraeli, for the first time in his Parliamentary career, now commanded a majority. It seemed—to change the simile—as though some brilliant but erratic comet, arrested in mid-course, had suddenly been given the elements of stability. The talents of the new Premier had always commanded the admiration of his supporters (and to a large extent of his opponents), but with this admiration there mingled in many quarters little of the sentiment of sincere esteem. By the admission of members of his own side of the House, the leader of the Conservative party had never evoked amongst his followers that feeling of implicit trust and affection with which his predecessor, Lord Derby, had been regarded. Amongst the strongest denunciations of his policy were

those pronounced by men long the occupants of the same benches with himself; and perhaps the most crushing indictment of his career is to be found, not in the party journals, nor yet in the addresses of Liberal politicians, but in the speeches of one who afterwards became his most trusted friend and colleague.

But Mr. Disraeli was now in power, and the question that arose was, 'What will he do with it?' Whatever chances Mr. Gladstone had once possessed of righting himself with the House had vanished with the general election. It was said that if he had met Parliament, and brought forward his budget announcing the repeal of the income-tax, all would have been well. Such speculations were now useless. He had taken the hazard of the die, and fortune had been against him; and there were not wanting members of both Houses, supposed to have been in sympathy with him, who could even grow jocular upon his fall. With Buckingham, the ex-Premier might have said:—

> 'Those you make friends
> And give your hearts to, when they once perceive
> The least rub in your fortunes, fall away
> Like water from ye, never found again
> But where they mean to sink ye.'*

Lord Selborne justly and severely rebuked a certain noble duke for his flippancies at the expense of the fallen Minister. It was the old story transferred into political life of a reverse of fortune testing friendship,

* *King Henry VIII.*, Act iii., Scene i.

and the flocking of the multitude after its new idol. We pass by these exhibitions of feeling, as both painful and humiliating.

Shortly before the House met for active business, the Liberal party were astonished at finding themselves practically without a leader. In one of the speeches delivered before his constituents, Mr. Gladstone had intimated that if the country resolved upon the dismissal of the Liberal Ministry, he should reserve to himself the right of limiting his future services to his party as he might think fit. He was sincerely desirous of enjoying that period of repose which he had fairly earned, though there were not lacking opponents who attributed his comparative retirement from Parliamentary life to personal pique. His letter to Lord Granville, however, dated 11, Carlton House Terrace, March 12, fully explained the reasons for that step which took the House and the country somewhat by surprise:—

'My dear Granville,—I have issued a circular to members of Parliament of the Liberal party on the occasion of the opening of Parliamentary business. But I feel it to be necessary that, while discharging this duty, I should explain what a circular could not convey with regard to my individual position at the present time. I need not apologise for addressing these explanations to you. Independently of other reasons for so troubling you, it is enough to observe that you have very long represented the Liberal party, and have also acted on behalf of the late Government, from its commencement to its close, in the House of Lords.

For a variety of reasons personal to myself, I could not contemplate any unlimited extension of active political service; and I am anxious that it should be clearly understood by those friends with whom I have acted in the direction of affairs, that at my age I must reserve my entire freedom to divest myself of all the responsibilities of leadership at no distant time. The need of rest will prevent me from giving more than occasional attendance in the House of Commons during the present session.

I should be desirous, shortly before the commencement of the session of 1875, to consider whether there would be advantage in my placing my services for a time at the disposal of the Liberal party, or whether I should then claim exemption from the duties I have hitherto discharged. If, however, there should be reasonable ground for believing that, instead of the course which I have sketched, it would be preferable, in the view of the party generally, for me to assume at once the place of an independent member, I should willingly adopt the latter alternative. But I shall retain all that desire I have hitherto felt for the welfare of the party, and if the gentlemen composing it should think fit either to choose a leader or make provision *ad interim*, with a view to the convenience of the present year, the person designated would, of course, command from me any assistance which he might find occasion to seek, and which it might be in my power to render.'

The Liberal party accepted the offer of Mr. Gladstone's informal and modified leadership for the session of 1874, and the chief members of the late Government made the best of the circumstances in which they were placed. The Ministerialists indulged themselves in a little pleasantry at the expense of an Opposition virtually without a leader, while the latter felt more than ever in how essential a degree Mr. Gladstone was necessary to the party. The Liberal position was that of the cast of *Hamlet* with the Prince of Denmark withdrawn.

Mr. Gladstone met his successful antagonist fairly, and in the course of the debate upon the Address defended the conduct of the late Government in dissolving Parliament. He held that the simple possession of a Parliamentary majority did not betoken absolute confidence in a Government, and would not justify it in retaining office until the natural expiration of Parliament. Admitting that the verdict of the country had been pronounced in no uncertain manner, and without

discussing the combinations which had brought it about, he did not regret the dissolution by which it had been evoked, if thereby an opportunity had been given to the people to express their opinion upon the conduct of public affairs, and upon those who ought to direct them in the future. The transfer of power was made under conditions favourable to the late Government; but the majority of the constituencies had rejected their proposals, and as this was the act of the country, the new Government was entitled to a fair trial, and open space for the development of their plans and the application of their principles. Everything like factious opposition should be avoided, and full opportunity should be given to the various departments to develop their plans and apply their principles. It was but right that the country should have the opportunity of judging of those plans and principles; and whether the result should be the continuance in power of gentlemen opposite or the contrary, the Constitution would provide a remedy for any conceivable state of things.

Now was witnessed for a short time the unusual spectacle of a perfectly friendly and peaceful House of Commons. The Government, making no pretensions to an original policy, resolved on following the example of their predecessors. Mr. Smollett proposed a vote of censure upon the late Government in connection with the dissolution, but Mr. Gladstone, in his reply, completely annihilated the arguments of the hon. gentleman, and the motion collapsed. The Premier would

hear nothing against the Liberal chief, while Sir Stafford Northcote confessed that the financial calculations of the ex-Prime Minister were quite correct, and that there was a surplus of five millions and a half. All, in fact, went 'merry as a marriage bell' until the introduction of several important religious measures by the Government.

The first of these measures was the Church Patronage of Scotland Bill. Brought forward in the House of Lords by the Duke of Richmond on behalf of the Government, the object of this bill was to abolish the system of lay patronage in the Established Kirk, and to make it over to the congregation. The question of patronage had agitated the people of Scotland for the last three hundred years, and the General Assembly had passed various resolutions expressing dissatisfaction with the existing condition of things. The bill, which was exceedingly short, proposed to abolish all Church patronage from the Crown downwards, and to create a constituency by whom the minister of a congregation might be selected. The qualification taken would be that which existed in other Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, and the patronage would be vested in the male communicants. The bill would enact, as regarded compensation to patrons, that it should not exceed one year's stipend; and it was believed that in the great majority of cases the patrons would not require compensation at all.

The Duke of Argyll and some other Liberal peers supported the bill, but on the motion for its second

reading in the Commons, Mr. Baxter proposed an amendment to the effect that the House considered it inexpedient to legislate on the subject of patronage in the Church of Scotland without further inquiry and information. The chief feature of the debate was a vigorous speech by Mr. Gladstone in opposition to the bill. The right hon. gentleman's reappearance in the House after a considerable absence was the signal for an unanimous outburst of cheering from the Liberal benches. His presence for some time escaped notice, but when it became known, his greeting was of the warmest and most flattering character. Mr. Gladstone at once grappled with the subject with that facility which in other men we should call eloquence. Regretting to find himself engaged in a new ecclesiastical controversy, yet admitting at the same time that the motive of the bill was laudable, the ex-Premier said its details were so objectionable, and its production was so inopportune and premature, that he was constrained to support Mr. Baxter's amendment. He based his opposition to the bill on three grounds—the exclusion of 'heritors' from all share, as such, in the election of ministers; the omission of any provision calculated to meet the case of the Highland parishes; and the alleged injustice which the abolition of patronage would do to the Free Church. The bill amounted to a cry of *Peccavi;* and he asked what they were going to do for those people whom they had driven out of the Established Church, and compelled to find ministers for themselves, to build churches, manses, and schools, and,

in fact, to organise and pay for the establishment of a complete system of Church government? If they would receive them back in bodies, he would withdraw his opposition to the bill. If the General Assembly would, on terms of fraternal equality, communicate with the Dissenting bodies, and endeavour to bring about an union of equality, he would assist them to the full extent of his power; but the present bill was neither fair nor generous. He wanted to know what the General Assembly had done towards reuniting itself to bodies which it turned out holding the view which formed the basis of the present bill. Mr. Gladstone finally discussed the effects which the measure had already produced:—

'There was scarcely any disestablishment movement in Scotland until the date of the introduction of this, I do not call it bad, but crude, premature, and insufficiently considered bill. But is it true that there is no promise of a disestablishment movement in Scotland now? What has happened since the announcement of this bill? The representatives of 1,200,000 of the Scottish people have, in their General Assembly, declared for disestablishment. . . . . There were 295, as I understand the number, against 98, those 98 not voting in favour of establishment, but for the previous question. I do not wish myself to be responsible for raising the question of disestablishment in Scotland. I am not an idolater of establishments.'

Here Mr. Gladstone was interrupted by an ironical cheer from the Ministerial benches, but he continued, amid the counter-cheering of his own supporters:—

'Neither am I one of those who would wish to raise a controversy of that kind, excepting under very strong justifying circumstances, and excepting with a perfect preparedness to abide the issue of that contest. If the cheer we have just heard—and it was, perhaps, a very fair, natural, and legitimate cheer—was intended to imply that I am a great enemy of establishments, because I used every effort in my power to put an end to

an establishment in Ireland, I must say, in answer to that cheer, that I do not repent the part I took. So far from repenting it, if I am to have a character with posterity at all—supposing posterity is ever to know that such a person as myself existed in this country—I am perfectly willing that my character should be tried simply and solely by the proceedings to which I was a party with regard to the Irish Church Establishment. I would, however, in this case recognise distinctions that are founded in the nature of things. In Scotland there has been no general movement of principle towards disestablishment; and although an established Church in a minority is an anomaly, it is an anomaly which I was well content to tolerate, and which the masses of the people of Scotland were justly and wisely prepared to tolerate, and not to be guided by abstract principles, but by a careful regard to the state of facts. But when in that state of things the Government throws down the challenge before them; proposes to invest this ecclesiastical body, or even the committee or commission of it, with powers never before entrusted to an ecclesiastical body, but which will infallibly be quoted in support of high clerical pretensions in other quarters; and when in doing that, it does it, as the right hon. and learned lord says, in the sense of strengthening the Established Church, but declining to recognise, for every practical purpose, the existence of those great Presbyterian communities whom you drove out and compelled to become Dissenters, entirely declining to recognise them, except as bodies from whom you make a certain profit by withdrawing one adherent from them here, and another from them there—that is a challenge, I think, to them to take up a question of the public and national endowment of religion such as was never before issued by a Government under any circumstances, and such as, in my opinion, it is totally inconsistent with prudence and wisdom to issue. If we have been rash—which I do not admit—our rashness will certainly fade into utter insignificance by the side of the gratuitous hardihood of the Government, which, as it appears to me, determines to initiate a religious war in Scotland under the influence of the best motives, but under circumstances the most slippery and dangerous.'

Mr. Disraeli, by whom, in the conduct of business, Mr. Gladstone's absence had been especially felt, congratulated the right hon. gentleman upon his reappearance, and expressed the general feeling of the House, when he said that all had missed him. He hoped his appearance that night would not be a solitary one. Replying to Mr. Gladstone's arguments, he denied that this was an

abolition of patronage; it was merely an alteration in the mode of selecting ministers, and in what they had done the Government had acted upon precedent. With reference to Mr. Gladstone's defence of his Irish Church policy, the Premier expressed a hope that his epitaph would not include the disestablishment of any other church. The second reading of the bill was carried by 307 to 109 votes.

The next important speech by Mr. Gladstone this session was that delivered on the Public Worship Regulation Bill. This measure, as introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury into the House of Lords, in its amended form, provided that to the bishop should be given that directory power as to worship, which, from sundry places in the Canons and in the Prayer Book, would seem to have been intended in the constitution of the Church. He was to be guided by the advice of a board of assessors, clerical and lay. Supposing that any one parishioner, or the rural dean, or the archdeacon, should think that the practices of a given incumbent with regard to public worship amounted to a grievance, he should have a right to go to the bishop and state it as such. If the bishop should think it was a matter that ought to be inquired into, he should call his assessors together; and if that tribunal should condemn the act or acts in question, the bishop would issue his monition. But the incumbent might be allowed an appeal to the archbishop with a board of assessors, whose decision should be final.

Having passed the Lords, the bill came down to the Commons, and its second reading was moved by Mr. Russell Gurney. During the first night of the debate, Mr. Gladstone rose and addressed the House in a speech which, according to the daily journals, fairly electrified the assembly. He began by the declaration that he had never approached any question with more embarrassment than this, and he had been constrained to quit his retirement to point out the false issue which had been laid before Parliament, and to dispel the delusions and the ignorance which prevailed throughout the country in regard to this bill. The difficulty under which Parliament laboured was increased by the history of the bill, which he traced from the first announcement of it by some 'clever fellow' in the columns of a daily paper, and also by the departure from the usual practice that the heads of the Church and of the State should concur in any legislation for the Church. His great objection, however, to the bill was its interference with liberty and with the variety of customs which had grown up in different parts of the country, though he also took exception to the omission of the bishops from the bill, and to the payment of the Judge's salary from the funds of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He considered that Ritualism was the smallest part of the question, and with regard to the eighth clause of the bill, which defined the offences to be dealt with, he insisted that by strictly and uniformly enforcing the Rubrics, any indiscreet or fussy bishop would be

enabled to root out local usages, traditions, and customs in the celebration of public worship; and the variations from the Rubric, whether of omission or commission, he maintained ought not to be interfered with. Mr. Gladstone enlarged upon the inconveniences of enforcing strict uniformity. For example, the Rubric required the catechising of children at the afternoon service, it required the Athanasian creed to be read thirteen times in the year, and it was very doubtful whether the present Hymnology of the Church was in accordance with the Rubrics. The right hon. gentleman also mentioned the separate or single administration of the consecrated elements as another matter in which strict uniformity could not be enforced. Then followed this passage, perhaps the most striking in the speech:—

'I, for one, will make no objection to any expenditure of time which the House is prepared to make in order to discuss the question; I will not be the man to raise the cry of difficulty or inconvenience; but I shall be the man from stage to stage of the bill, as far as it may be necessary, to point out the real nature of the work we are doing, to endeavour to assist the House in sifting these proposals to the bottom, and in dissipating and dispelling the gross illusions which possess the country, and, to a great extent, as it appears to me, the mind of the right hon. and learned gentleman, with regard to the provisions and probable operation of the bill. . . . . I think I have shown the House that inconvenience must arise from the very first slip of judgment on the part of a bishop who may allow an improper suit to proceed. Well, then, the House may say fairly—"Do not you think something ought to be done?" and I think the idea that something ought to be done is what weighs upon the minds of most men. I will tell you what I think ought to be done in principle. The House can do nothing without acknowledging how much we owe to the great mass of the clergy of the Church of England for their zeal and devotion. For eighteen years I was a servant of a very large body of them. My place is now most worthily occupied by another; but

I have not forgotten, and never can forget, the many sacrifices they were always ready to make, and the real liberality of mind which upon a thousand occasions they have shown. But even that is a thing totally insignificant in comparison with the work which they are doing. You talk of the observance of the law. Why, sir, every day and night the clergyman of the Church of England, by the spirit he diffuses around him, by the lessons he imparts, lays the nation under a load of obligation to him. The eccentricities of a handful of men, therefore, can never make me forget the illustrious merit of the services done by the mass of the clergy in an age which is beyond all others luxurious, and, I fear, selfish and worldly. These are the men who hold up to us a banner on which is written the motto of Eternal Life, and of the care for things unseen which must remain the chief hope of man through all the vicissitudes of his mortal life.'

After this eloquent tribute to the clergy, Mr. Gladstone observed that there was imposed on him the duty of saying something about what ought to be done in this matter—at least in principle. He had accordingly embodied his ideas on the subject into six resolutions, which he proceeded to read to the House as follows:—

'1. That in proceeding to consider the provisions of the Bill for the Regulation of Public Worship, this House cannot do otherwise than take into view the lapse of more than two centuries since the enactment of the present Rubrics of the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England; the multitude of particulars embraced in the conduct of Divine service under their provisions; the doubts occasionally attaching to their interpretation, and the number of points they are thought to leave undecided; the diversities of local custom which under these circumstances have long prevailed; and the unreasonableness of proscribing all varieties of opinion and usage among the many thousands of congregations of the Church distributed throughout the land.

2. That this House is therefore reluctant to place in the hands of every single bishop, on the motion of one or of three persons howsoever defined, greatly increased facilities towards procuring an absolute ruling of many points hitherto left open and reasonably allowing of diversity; and thereby towards the establishment of an inflexible rule of uniformity throughout the land, to the prejudice, in matters indifferent, of the liberty now practically existing.

3. That the House willingly acknowledges the great and exemplary

devotion of the clergy in general to their sacred calling, but is not on that account the less disposed to guard against the indiscretion, or thirst for power, or other faults of individuals.

4. That the House is therefore willing to lend its best assistance to any measure recommended by adequate authority, with a view to provide more effectual securities against any neglect of or departure from strict law which may give evidence of a design to alter, without the consent of the nation, the spirit or substance of the established religion.

5. That, in the opinion of the House, it is also to be desired that the members of the Church, having a legitimate interest in her services, should receive ample protection against precipitate and arbitrary changes of established custom by the sole will of the clergyman and against the wishes locally prevalent among them; and that such protection does not appear to be afforded by the provisions of the bill now before the House.

6. That the House attaches a high value to the concurrence of her Majesty's Government with the Ecclesiastical authorities in the initiative of legislation affecting the established Church.'

Sir William Harcourt said they had all been under the wand of the Great Enchanter, and had listened with rapt attention as he poured forth the wealth of his incomparable eloquence; but the speech they had just heard could only be described as a powerful plea for universal Nonconformity, or optional conformity. The chief thing to be done was to reassert the unalterable attachment of the people of England to the principles of the Reformation. The debate was adjourned, and on the 13th Mr. Disraeli said that Mr. Gladstone's resolutions could only point to one conclusion—the abolition of that religious settlement which had prevailed in this country for more than two centuries, and on which depended much of our civil liberty. Such propositions ought at once to be brought under discussion, and if the second reading of the bill were voted after the conclusion of the pending debate, he would give Mr. Gladstone an oppor-

tunity of bringing forward his six resolutions on the motion for going into committee. The debate was resumed on the 15th. Mr. Walter thought that the grievances of which Mr. Gladstone complained—even the compulsion to read the Athanasian Creed and the Prayer for the Church Militant—were as nothing compared with the Ritualistic practices against which the bill was directed. The discussion was closed by Mr. Disraeli, who said that the object of the bill was to put down Ritualism; and if Mr. Gladstone did not know what Ritualism was, he was in a very isolated position.

The Government thus clearly adopted the bill, and the second reading was carried without a division. It soon became evident that Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were distasteful to the bulk of his own supporters, the whole House in fact being practically unanimous in its desire to arrest the progress of Ritualism. On the following day, accordingly, Mr. Gladstone announced the withdrawal of his resolutions. The House having passed the second reading of the bill without a division, he could not in fairness, he said, do otherwise than accept that decision as an expression of the desire of the House to proceed to the consideration of the bill in committee, without raising any of those broad questions relating to the grounds and proper limits of legislation, which undoubtedly were raised in the resolutions of which he had given notice. Notice had also been given of important amendments which tended greatly to the improvement of the bill. He therefore did not intend to move his resolutions. A collision arose with

the Lords upon an amendment carried in the Commons. The chief incidents in the debate in the Lower House were Sir Wm. Harcourt's passage of arms with his former chief, and Mr. Disraeli's description of the Marquis of Salisbury as a man who never measured his phrases, but was 'a great master of gibes, and flouts, and sneers.' Eventually the Commons did not insist upon their amendment, and the bill was read a third time on the 3rd of August.

The Public Worship Regulation Bill became law, but how inoperative it has been may be gathered from the fact that Ritualistic practices in the Church are at this moment more flourishing than ever, and in most dioceses are practically suffered to go unchecked.

Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed the Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill, introduced by Lord Sandon. The object of this measure was the transference to the Charity Commissioners of the powers held by the Endowed Schools Commissioners, appointed by the Act of 1869; powers which at the close of the session of 1873 it had been agreed to prolong for another twelve months, the original term of three years having expired. It was further proposed to alter the definitions contained in the former Act, so as to restore to the Church of England the administration of numerous schools in cases where the founder had recognised the authority of a bishop, or had directed attendance on the service of the church, or had required that the master should be in holy orders. This bill was regarded by the Liberal party as the first distinct attempt to

reverse recent legislation, and to the Nonconformists it was especially obnoxious; for it practically gave to one great religious body the control of schools that were thrown open to the whole nation by the policy of the last Parliament. The principles of the measure—which thus went far beyond the transfer of the powers of the Endowed Schools Commissioners to the Charity Commissioners—gave rise to considerable agitation.

Accordingly, when the order for the second reading came on, Mr. Forster moved the rejection of the bill. The more he studied it, he said, the more he felt convinced that it was a step backward. He could adduce arguments which even hon. gentlemen opposite could hardly disregard, to show that the change of policy proposed was unwise, reactionary, and unjust, and the change in administration inexpedient and needless, if not dangerous. He was convinced that the noble lord was attempting to claim for the Established Church—which, after all, was only a denomination, although the largest—schools which really belonged to the nation, and that he was striving so to arrange things that members of that Church should have exclusive control over schools which ought to be open to all classes of her Majesty's subjects. Out of 1,082 grammar schools, 584 were founded before the Toleration Act; 35 were pre-Reformation schools; and 44 were founded during the Commonwealth. Mr. Forster paid a strong tribute to the Commissioners for their services in the cause of education, only ten of their schemes having been challenged in Parliament.

This measure, inequitable, unusual, and unwise as it was, drew forth a strong condemnation from Mr. Gladstone. The Church, he held, had no title to the endowments bestowed on her between 1530 and 1660—when no man could live outside her pale; and her title was in no way strengthened by the fact that the founder had directed Church instruction to be given to the children. This retrograde legislation was unusual and unwise; for it was a bill for undoing part of the work of the last Parliament. The party which sat opposite possessed, after having been many years in a minority, a large majority; 'but,' continued Mr. Gladstone, 'what I wish to point out is this, that the history of our country for the last forty or fifty years presents to us, as a general rule, this remarkable picture: The initiative of policy in almost every instance—I do not know of even one exception—both of administrative and legislative, was supplied by the Liberal party, and subsequently adopted in prudence and in honesty by the party which is called Conservative. Take the financial, take the colonial, take any of the departments; and I venture to say you will find that this is a true description of the history of which we have all been witnesses. When the Conservative Government came into power in 1834, and again in 1841, after the first Reform Act had been the subject of a long dispute and much contention, there was absolute security in the mind of the country, and full conviction that the party coming into office would not be so unwise and so unpatriotic as to retrace the steps taken by their predecessors. This is the first instance

on record, so far as I have been able to ascertain, of any deliberate attempt being made by a Ministry at retrogression.'

The speaker, nevertheless, went on to make allusion to the case of the Presbyterian Establishment, which had been placed in possession of ecclesiastical patronage in Scotland in the time of William III. A Tory Ministry subsequently came into power, which made an attempt at passing a reactionary bill. This Ministry introduced the measure for the establishment of patronage in the Church of Scotland, which involved the repeal of the previous Act of William III. This was the one solitary instance to which her Majesty's Government could refer. And what an instance!—an instance that brought about the passage of the Act which the same party now proposed to repeal, because it was an act of retrogression, and because it interfered with the integrity of the Presbyterian constitution. That was the only instance of any similar course that could be adduced in support of the ill-omened bill they were now invited to vote for. If that were so—if it were a most unusual step—it was also as unwise as it was unusual. Mr. Gladstone asked in conclusion:—

'What does this bill amount to? The right hon. gentleman who has just sat down (Mr. R. A. Cross) has said that this is one of the legacies which have been left by the Liberal Government. Yes; there have been a great many legacies left by the Liberal Government. The policy which at present governs every department of the State is part of a legacy left by the Liberal Government. The right hon. gentleman and his party ought to be more grateful for those Liberal legacies on which they will have to live as a Ministry. What are we now asked to do? The majority of this Parliament is invited to undo the work of their predecessors in office, in

defiance of precedents, which I should weary the House by enumerating, so great are their number and uniformity. It is rather remarkable that what is now the majority is about to undo an Act which they had never opposed in its passage. I believe that the conditions with reference to schools before the Toleration Act and before the Reformation were carried in this House without a division. I believe I am even strictly correct in saying that this provision was not only agreed to without a division, but without an adverse voice when the question was put from the Chair. Yet they now avail themselves of the first opportunity they have to attempt to repeal what they did not object to when it was before Parliament. Is this wise? Is it politic? Is it favourable to the true interests of the Established Church? . . . . What has been the judgment generally passed upon us by foreign authors, men of the highest weight and importance in their respective countries? They have often told truths of which we should not be fully aware from our own observation. What have they told us of their judgment of the course and conduct of the British Legislature? If you consult any one of those great political writers who adorn the literature of their own countries, you will find their language respecting us uniform. When they look at our political constitution they are struck by the multitude of obstructions which for the defence of minorities we allow to be placed in the way of legislation. They are struck by observing that the immediate result is great slowness in the steps we take; but when they refer to the consequences of this slowness they find one great and powerful compensation, and it is that in England all progress is sure. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum.* Whatever has been once decided, whatever has once taken its place in the Statute Book, or has been adopted in our Administration, no feelings of party, and no vicissitudes of majorities or minorities are allowed to draw the nation into the dangerous, though they may be the seductive, paths of retrogression. That is the principle to which we appeal, and, even were the rights of the case less clear, even were it equitable instead of inequitable, for the Church to make the claims which are made in her behalf by the Government, most unwise would it be on the part of any Administration—and, of all others, most unwise on the part of a Conservative Administration—to give a shock to one of the great guiding principles and laws which have governed the policy of this country throughout a course of many generations, and the solidity and security of which is one of the main guarantees of the interests we possess, and the liberty we enjoy.'

Notwithstanding this effective attack upon its leading principle, the bill passed its second stage by a large majority. The numbers were—For the second reading,

291; against, 209—majority for the Government 82. The Opposition, however, were determined not to let the matter rest. They brought forward a hostile motion on the proposal for going into committee, but this was defeated by 162 to 193. Yet though the bill went into committee, the Prime Minister speedily found that it would be hotly contested, and deemed it unwise to proceed with it in its primal shape. He accordingly announced the abandonment of the foundation clauses, and the restriction of the measure to the mere abolition of the Endowed Schools Commissioners and the transfer of their powers to the Charity Commissioners. Making a confession that might almost seem to prove his incapacity to fill the position he occupied, he admitted that after hours of anxious consideration, the disputed clauses were unintelligible to him. Some days later, in giving the names of the Commissioners who were to take the Endowed Schools business upon them, Mr. Disraeli assumed personally the responsibility for the introduction of the bill.

The weakness of the Premier's position being thus exposed, Mr. Gladstone retorted upon him with great spirit. The nature of a Conservative policy, he observed, was now clearly seen. Mr. Disraeli had said that some of the clauses of the bill were unintelligible to him; this was an important discovery, and it was a pity that it had not been made earlier, as the charge of obstructive conduct might not then have been brought against members on the Opposition side of the House. The pledge of the Premier to call atten-

tion to this subject anew in another session of Parliament was a pledge dictated by Ministerial exigencies and by the state of the relations of those in the Cabinet, far more than by any well-weighed consideration of what was to take place in the future. If that was so, he thought the Nonconformists, and not they only but those who attached an enormous value to the principles and methods of stable legislation, had good reason to congratulate themselves upon the present situation. In closing his address, Mr. Gladstone said, 'When a great host attempted the invasion of an enemy's country, and was beset by storms, and baffled by adverse winds, the practice was to erect an altar, and to put the knife to the throat of the victim. The Commissioners of the Endowed Schools are, on this occasion, those who have been called upon to submit to the sacrificial knife; and these three gentlemen—most guilty in the opinion of some who have spoken and whom they have perhaps offended; but most innocent, most meritorious, and most patriotic in the judgment of others—are to give up their official existence as an atonement and reconciliation for others, and the great mass of Nonconformist interests throughout the country are, I rejoice to say, to enjoy an absolute immunity from danger; the only price that is paid for all this being the official life of Lord Lyttelton and his colleagues. In saying that, I am very sorry for what the right hon. gentleman calls the policy of her Majesty's Government. The policy of her Majesty's Government with regard to the Endowed

Schools of the country has received this most striking, this most triumphant attestation—that three gentlemen who, as the noble lord says, are our friends, are to be displaced from their office in order that three gentlemen who are his friends may be put into office, in order to prosecute with bated hopes and weakened forces, the difficult duties imposed on them by the country.'

The Endowed Schools Act Amendment Bill, in its mutilated form, received the Royal assent in the month of August. It was not a measure to reflect credit upon its authors; and seeing that its original scope had been greatly narrowed, the Government would have done wisely in abandoning it altogether. But this was one of the earliest indications of a determination, on the part of the Conservative majority, to exercise its power —not always with consideration.

We now come to several addresses which Mr. Gladstone has delivered in recent years on the subject of education. They are typical of other speeches which the right hon. gentleman has at various times made upon the same question, and show the speaker in the favourable light of a friend to liberal culture—a character to which he has been steadfast since he addressed the students of Liverpool College, at a very early stage in his career. The first of these addresses, which formed, perhaps, the most interesting extra-Parliamentary utterance of the recess of 1872, was delivered on the occasion of the distribution of the prizes to the pupils of Liverpool College. We have already had occasion, in the earlier part of this work, to

make a brief extract from that address, but it now demands some further notice. The Premier entered a strong plea on behalf of higher education, and then passed on to refer to the extraordinary and boastful manifestation in this age of ours of the extremest forms of unbelief. After a searching examination of Dr. Strauss's recently-published work, *The Old Belief and the New*, Mr. Gladstone tendered this counsel to the students:—

'You will hear much to the effect that the divisions among Christians render it impossible to say what Christianity is, and so destroy the certainty of religion. But if the divisions among Christians are remarkable, not less so is their unity in the great doctrines which they hold. Well nigh fifteen hundred years—years of a more sustained activity than the world has ever before seen—have passed away since the great controversies respecting the Deity and the Person of the Redeemer were, after a long agony, determined. As before that time in a manner less defined, but adequate for their day, so ever since that time, amid all chance and change, more, ay, many more than ninety-nine in every hundred Christians have with one will confessed the Deity and Incarnation of our Lord as the cardinal and central truths of our religion. Surely there is some comfort here, some sense of brotherhood, some glory in the past, some hope for the times that are to come. On one, and only one, more of the favourite fallacies of the day I will yet presume to touch. It is the opinion and boast of some that man is not responsible for his belief. Lord Brougham was at one time stated to have given utterance to this opinion, whether truly I know not. But this I know; it was my privilege to hear from his own lips the needful and due limitation of that proposition. "Man," he said, "is not responsible to man for his belief." But as before God one and the same law applies to opinions and to acts, or rather to inward and to outer acts, for opinions are inward acts. Many a wrong opinion may be guiltless because formed in ignorance, and because that ignorance may not be our fault; but who shall presume to say there is no mercy for wrong actions also, when they, too, have been due to ignorance, and that ignorance has not been guilty? The question is not whether judgments and actions are in the same degree influenced by the condition of the moral motives. If it is undeniable that self-love and passion have an influence upon both, then, so far as that influence goes, for both we must be prepared to

answer. Should we, in common life, ask a body of swindlers for an opinion upon swindling, or of gamblers for an opinion upon gambling, or of misers upon bounty? And if in matters of religion we allow pride and perverseness to raise a cloud between us and the truth, so that we see it not, the false opinion that we form is but the index of that perverseness and that pride, and both for them, and for it as their offspring, we shall be justly held responsible. Who they are upon whom this responsibility will fall it is not ours to judge. These laws are given to us, not to apply presumptuously to others, but to enforce honestly against ourselves. Next to a Christian life, my friends, you will find your best defence against reckless novelty of speculation in sobriety of temper, and in sound intellectual habits. Be slow to stir inquiries which you do not mean particularly to pursue to their proper end. Be not afraid to suspend your judgment, or feel and admit to yourselves how narrow are the bounds of knowledge. Do not too readily assume that to us have been opened royal roads to truth, which were heretofore hidden from the whole family of man; for the opening of such roads would not be so much favour as caprice. If it is bad to yield a blind submission to authority, it is not less an error to deny to it its reasonable weight. Eschewing a servile adherence to the past, regard it with reverence and gratitude, and accept its accumulations in inward as well as outward things, as the patrimony which it is your part in life both to preserve and to improve.'

For the catholicity of its sentiments, however, and the excellence of its counsel, one of the best addresses Mr. Gladstone ever delivered was that spoken in aid of the Buckley Institute and Reading-room, in the recess of 1878. It was specially directed to the working classes. The address covered a wide range of topics, and we can only touch upon those possessing a permanent interest. Referring to the friendly and benefit societies which abound throughout the country, Mr. Gladstone eulogised them for enabling the working population of this country to realise that idea of independence and self-support, which, while very desirable for all men, was most of all honourable, and even noble, in those who depended upon their daily labour for their

daily bread. The only thing he exhorted them jealously to watch over was, that the societies were based upon principles of sound calculation, so that those who had supported them in their youth and maturity, should not find in old age that their funds had disappeared. Mr. Gladstone's warning derived additional point from the fact that reports had been published of societies unsound in this respect. Touching upon co-operative societies, he hoped that in proportion as the retail dealers of the country came more and more to understand the best mode of carrying on their business —that is to say, of working it upon ready-money principles, instead of long credit—they would be able to compete advantageously with these societies. There were also societies for manufacturing productions, and some for carrying on farms, which would be beneficial by putting, to a certain extent, the working man in the position of the capitalist.

There was a broad liberality of view in the speaker's utterances upon the subject of trades unions, and also on the question of the employment of women. 'What I would always desire,' he said, 'in trades-unions, and what I look upon as essential to their full utility, is, that those who enter into such combinations shall fully and absolutely respect the liberty of those who do not wish to enter them, and further, that they shall, although it is a difficult lesson for them, adopt large and liberal principles with regard to all the points that touch them in the exercise of their professions. Questions such as the employment of women, the employment of boys

and young men, piecework, &c.—on the whole of these questions they should get rid of narrow and selfish views, and should adopt sound ones. I am bound to say that I think they are often lectured upon these narrow and selfish views by other people in higher stations who are very apt to act upon narrow and selfish views themselves when they can. But that is not the question. Is it the best for themselves? I am convinced that they should be large and liberal in all their views with regard to the employment of labour, because, after all, when men choose to put unnatural and unnecessary restrictions on the labour of women and children, what is that but putting it on the members of their own family, for these women and children are persons in intimate associations with them?'

Mr. Gladstone recognised the necessity for recreation and relaxation, and after alluding to the provision for games and refreshments, which were natural and proper, he touched upon the question of debate. He believed it to be a mistake to suppose that members of the community at large were not fit to meet together and debate like men those matters in which they were able to feel an interest. If they had the truth of confidence in their opinions, they should not be ashamed or afraid to compare them with others.

The last topic dealt with related to the greater facilities for intellectual improvement enjoyed by the working classes of the present day as compared with their predecessors. The materials were better, and the access to the means of instruction far easier.

'It was said of Socrates that he called down philosophy from heaven. But the enterprise of certain enlightened publishers has taught them to work for the million, and that is a very important fact. When I was a boy I used to be fond of looking into a bookseller's shop, but there was nothing to be seen there that was accessible to the working man of that day. Take a Shakespeare, for example. I remember very well that I gave £2 16s. for my first copy; but you can get an admirable copy for 3s. Those books are accessible now which formerly were quite inaccessible. We may be told that you want amusement, but that does not exclude improvement. There are a set of worthless books written now and at times which you should avoid; which profess to give amusement; but in reading the works of such authors as Shakespeare and Scott there is the greatest possible amusement in its best form. Do you suppose that when you see men engaged in study that they dislike it? No. There is labour, no doubt, of a certain kind—mental labour, but it is so associated with interest all along that it is forgotten in the delight which it carries in its performance, and no people know that better than the working classes. I want you to understand that multitudes of books now are constantly being prepared and placed within reach of the population at large, for the most part executed by writers of a high stamp, having subjects of the greatest interest, and which enable you, at a moderate price, not to get a cheap literature which is secondary in its quality, but to go straight into the very heart—if I may so say, into the sanctuary of the temple of literature—and become acquainted with the greatest and best works that the men of our country have produced. It is not to be supposed that working-men, on coming home from labour, are to study Euclid and works of that character; and it is not to be desired unless in the case of very special gifts; but what is to be desired is that some effort should be made by men of all classes, and perhaps by none more than by the labouring class, to lift ourselves above the level of what is purely frivolous, and to endeavour to find our amusement in making ourselves acquainted with things of real interest and beauty.'

Mr. Gladstone also delivered an address of great practical value on the occasion of the distribution of prizes at the Nonconformist School at Mill Hill, in June, 1879. In the outset, he impressed two necessary lessons upon the pupils. One was, he said, that those who had received prizes must take good care not to be inveigled by the first-fruits of their efforts into

sluggishness, for that was a danger which beset the young, and premature success had been a snare to many. As for those who had not received prizes, the occasion which should inspire caution in others should inspire hope in them. It was upon perseverance that their future enterprise would depend. He therefore exhorted them to bear their disappointment like men, like Englishmen, like Christians. In comparing the relative advantages of Mill Hill School, and the great and wealthy seats of learning in the country, the speaker observed:—

'Do not suppose for a moment that I have come here to renounce my fidelity to those ancient schools whose interests are so deeply seated in my heart. You may not have the advantage—and it ought to be an advantage—of the noble and ancient memories connected with many great schools in the country. They ought to appeal with resistless force to all those who belong to them not to prove unworthy of those great memories, and I rejoice to say it is so—at any rate in many among them. But, although you must be content with viewing in the future that which those great institutions have been able to do for themselves in the present and past, yet you have your advantages. If you are not sustained by ancient traditions, neither are you hampered by any prejudices which in certain cases may prevail. All that they have achieved is before you. Their great experiences are at your service and command. You have the power to appropriate to yourselves every good rule they have made, and you have the power where you are not satisfied with the results to correct them. You have this enormous advantage under the peculiar conditions of this age. You, the authorities of these schools, and you, the boys, have not to contend in the same degree as have the authorities and boys of some of the ancient schools, with the tremendous dangers and temptations which the overflow of money associated with inadequate wisdom produces; not the extravagance of the boys only, but in many instances the more serious evil of parents giving to their boys that which they think will contribute to their happiness, but which, in fact, tends to weaken the fibre of character, to relax manly resolution, to anticipate at an early age enjoyments intended only for manhood. . . . . These are great advantages; and that which others possess because their fathers handed it down to them, you, I hope, are gradually

and progressively accumulating in order to hand it over to those who may come after you. However, it was a great and bold undertaking to establish a school of this kind in a field which was already occupied by those great institutions so well known to us as the public schools of England. But there was certainly one reason which I cannot shrink from noticing, and which I think constitutes not only the high merit, but the very high merit of those who set themselves about founding Mill Hill School. . . . I need not say I pay them the highest honour for determining to give this advantage of a public school education, not on a basis merely neutral or negative with regard to religion, but on a basis which would supply all their wants and enable the pupils, according to the conscientious convictions their parents entertain, and in which they have been reared, to prepare themselves for that Christian life on which they are about to enter. I earnestly hope that upon that basis on which you have begun you will continue to stand. As you have not been ashamed or afraid to face the difficult enterprise of founding this public school, so I trust you will never be ashamed or afraid of recognising not a generalising and neutralising religion, but a religious teaching fully equal for all the honourable purposes of life.'

Following this admirable passage, came a protest against the notion that education was a merely mechanical process; after which Mr. Gladstone spoke earnestly of the great value and importance attaching to the study of natural history. Having cited many other advantages to be derived from it, among them being that power of accurate deduction which is invaluable in the pursuit of every branch of knowledge, he observed, 'We all know how much has been done in the researches of our time by applying the principle of comparison—comparison, for example, of the structure of living bodies as the basis of modern biology, the comparison of the structures of languages as the basis of philology. Depend upon it, then, that the observation and analogy which natural history is continually suggesting, as it is valuable for the purposes of science, so it has a lighter but a most graceful and civilising

use in supplying those analogies taken from the seen world and applicable to the unseen, assisting in giving to every work of the mind that grace and beauty which is just as appropriate and desirable, though it may not be so indispensable to it, as are the higher qualities of solidity and truth.' The concluding words of the address had reference to the cultivation of the higher virtues. 'I trust you know what are the qualities you ought to esteem and cherish—that your wish is to lead a life that is manful, modest, truthful, active, diligent, generous, and humble. You ought to take for your motto those wonderful words of the Apostle, where he says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"—everything that is good is to be within your view, and nothing that is not good. I am certain that if you cherish those virtues you will never forget the basis of them, you will never forget where lies their root. I do not mean that in your periodical and your play you are continually to be parading your religious feelings and convictions. These are very deep and solemn subjects, and will grow in the shade rather than in the sunlight. Let them ever be in your minds, as they are indigenous to the root of every excellence. Whatever you aspire to, aspire above all to be Christians and to Christian perfection.'

Mr. Gladstone in his time has played many parts; but in none have his English good sense and manliness, his sagacity, and his deep moral feeling been so

conspicuous as in his addresses upon education and kindred subjects. His political friends and opponents alike find here common ground upon which to pay him just tribute. To the working classes especially have his addresses been most valuable. He has recalled them from the pursuit of social and industrial will-o'-the-wisps, while he has at the same time acknowledged their right to combine in every lawful manner for their well-being and prosperity. He has striven to show that labour, the universal lot of man, is honourable, and that social drones are the most prolific source of danger to the commonwealth. And while he has thus enjoined the value and sacredness of labour, by the wise and useful legislation which he has initiated, he has enabled the working man to treasure up the fruits of that labour, and to make provision for old age. Moreover, he has insisted upon the high and noble results which follow from culture and self-improvement, counselling the toilers in our factories and workshops that these are to be sought not alone for the material advantages they may bring, but for that deeper and richer good which follows upon the development of the mental and moral faculties. Mr. Gladstone has, in fine, ever urged the people onward in the path of real progress, and has shown them how, by self-denying and strenuous effort, they may enjoy for themselves, and extend to others, the blessings of a robust and a Christian civilisation.

CHAPTER XXVI.

RESIGNATION OF THE LIBERAL LEADERSHIP.

Mr. Gladstone definitely resigns the Liberal Leadership—Second Letter to Lord Granville—His Lordship's Reply—Public Opinion on the ex-Premier's Retirement—Speech of Mr. Forster at Bradford—The Liberal Party without a Leader—Claimants for the Post—Election of the Marquis of Hartington—Mr. Gladstone's appearances in the House of Commons—He supports the Burials Bill—Attacks the Budget.

WE have seen, from Mr. Gladstone's letter to Earl Granville, that the Liberal leader held himself at liberty to determine at any time, according as circumstances might dictate to him, whether he could with satisfaction continue in his onerous position as the active chief of the party. His friends, foreseeing the difficulties which must ensue from his withdrawal from the leadership, earnestly desired his continuance in the post where none could well follow him. But his retirement came earlier than was anticipated. Having thrown himself deeply into literary and controversial studies, and finding in the existing aspect of public affairs little hope of being able to render such service to the Liberal party and the country as he desired, Mr. Gladstone resolved on completing the act of resignation to which he had some time before referred as a not distant possibility.

Accordingly, early in January, 1875, he addressed

a second letter to Lord Granville, announcing his resignation in decisive and unmistakable terms. 'The time has, I think, arrived,' wrote the ex-Premier, 'when I ought to revert to the subject of the letter which I addressed to you on March 12. Before determining whether I should offer to assume a charge which might extend over a length of time, I have reviewed, with all the care in my power, a number of considerations, both public and private, of which a portion, and these not by any means insignificant, were not in existence at the date of that letter. The result has been that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party; and that, at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life. I need hardly say that my conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which I have heretofore acted; and, whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support. I should, perhaps, add that I am at present, and mean for a short time to be, engaged on a special matter, which occupies me closely.'

Such a resignation on the part of a great political chief was without precedent; but while many lamented the step, none challenged the right of this eminent statesman to retire after forty-two years of active

service. Even with a less brilliant catalogue of legislative achievements than his, it was surely within his own legitimate province to say when the time had come for putting off the political armour, and yielding the command of the Liberal forces into other hands. At the same time, the announcement came with so great a surprise upon the country that for the moment it could scarcely be realised. That he who for a considerable period had been the life and soul of one of the two great political parties in the State should thus suddenly relinquish its control, carried something like consternation into the ranks of those who were anxiously looking for the consolidation of the Liberal party. Efforts were made to induce Mr. Gladstone to reconsider his decision, but in vain; and in formally acknowledging the receipt of the ex-Premier's letter, Earl Granville wrote as follows:—'I have communicated to you in detail the reasons which make me profoundly regret and deprecate the conclusion at which you have arrived. Your late colleagues share these feelings to the fullest extent, and have regretted the failure of their endeavour to persuade you to come to a different decision. We have no doubt that the Liberal party, both in and out of Parliament, will feel as we do on the subject. The observations we have addressed to you are prompted by considerations of public advantage for the future, and not merely by our sense of your great services, and our sentiments of personal admiration and attachment.'

The daily and weekly press, both metropolitan

and provincial, were all but unanimous in their expressions of sympathy and regret, and in recognising in Mr. Gladstone's retirement a loss to the nation. Many journals expressed a hope that the resignation was the result of a temporary depression, rather than of a lasting mood of mind; and, while assuming that there would be many occasions when his mind would revert to Westminster, they trusted also that a sense of duty to the nation would bring him back at recurrent intervals to the scene of so many triumphs.

Mr. Bright, in addressing his constituents at Birmingham, alluded to the few disparaging comments made upon the Liberal leader's withdrawal—comments scarcely noticeable amid the general expressions of esteem and regret. 'I will say nothing,' observed the right hon. member for Birmingham, 'in answer to ungenerous things that have been said and done. Of this I am well aware—that Mr. Gladstone, like an old and a noble Roman, can be content with deserving the praises of his country, even though some of his countrymen should deny them to him.'

Mr. Gladstone's retirement did not, of course, signify the end of his Parliamentary career. He would still tender such advice and counsel to his party as he was able, and appear from time to time in his place in the House of Commons. But the nature and meaning of the step could not be disguised. The previous session had witnessed a disorganised Opposition, but another was about to open which would find a party in yet more lamentable plight—without a

chief and without a programme. Tributes were paid to the retiring leader in all parts of the country, and by persons of all shades and complexions of political opinion. But the feelings of those who most deeply felt his loss, and most truly assessed its significance, were, perhaps, best interpreted by Mr. Forster, when he remarked that although every one knew Mr. Gladstone's power and eloquence, it was only those who had been brought into close personal contact with him who knew what an example he had set in the absolute sincerity, the absolute want of selfishness or self-seeking in the principles and the manner in which he had conducted political life.* 'It is difficult for any one,' said the member for Bradford, 'who has not been brought into close contact with him, and seen him under occasions of difficulty such as those in which a colleague has seen him—occasions, I must say, not only of difficulty, but even of temptation—it is difficult for any one who has not been in that position thoroughly to realise what an example of purity, of self-sacrifice, and of disinterestedness he has set to politicians throughout the country, and to what an extent he, as far as he has acted, has raised the tone of political life. . . . I have only one word to add, and I think it is not unfitting to mention even in this business assembly, that, although he has thought proper from motives personal to himself, which are sufficient for himself and affecting his own personal life, to withdraw from the active leadership of one of

* Speech delivered at a meeting of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce.

the great parties in the State, yet I do not for one agree that that implies that he will withdraw from party or political life. I am sure that, as men of business—as members of a Chamber of Commerce—we should be the last persons to desire that. He has many claims upon the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen for the services he has done them, and although perhaps not one of the greatest of those claims, yet a very great claim, is what he has done for commerce and men of business, by his advocacy of the true principles of trade, and by his introduction of principles of finance which have had the effect of making the taxes less onerous upon tradesmen and upon individuals than they have ever been before. It certainly is not for me to view with anything but with fear and alarm the thought that he could withdraw his talents and his power entirely from political or Parliamentary life. I am sure you will join me in the hope and trust that this will not be the case.' These sentiments were very largely echoed by the Conservatives, and of course entirely so by the Liberals. The former, for many reasons, as sincerely regretted his withdrawal as the latter.

The Liberal party now found themselves with a vacancy, and laboured under some bewilderment how to fill it. They had amongst them two men of genius, Mr. Lowe and Mr. Bright, and some half a dozen others with at least a passable title to statesmanlike qualities. It was known, however, that Mr. Bright would decline the post of leader, if elected;

and whenever the name of Mr. Lowe was mentioned, it was invariably received with admissions of his striking intellectual power and ability, but as invariably also followed by a negative shaking of the head. Genius, when erratic, is much more troublesome than mediocrity. By-and-by only four names came to be discussed, viz., those of Mr. Forster, Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Goschen, and Lord Hartington. The three first-named were subsequently withdrawn, Mr. Forster (whose claims were considered the strongest) writing to Mr. Adam as follows:—'It appears to me that I should not receive that general support without which I ought not to attempt to fulfil the duties of this most difficult though honourable post; and, therefore, though I must not be supposed to anticipate that the choice of the majority of the meeting would fall on me, I feel it my duty to state that, even should it chance to do so, I could not undertake the task.' It was understood that Mr. Gladstone thought the selection of Lord Hartington as his successor the most fitting that could be made under the circumstances. On the 3rd of February, about 140 members of the Liberal party met at the Reform Club to proceed to an election. Mr. Bright was voted to the chair, and Mr. Whitbread moved the following resolution:—'That this meeting desires to express its deep sense of the great loss which the country has sustained in the retirement of Mr. Gladstone from the leadership of the Liberal party.' Mr. Fawcett seconded the motion, and in

paying Mr. Gladstone a high tribute on behalf of his independent supporters, observed:—'When we opposed him, in the very height of his power—and I say this most advisedly—we never admired him more than in the hour of his defeat. I think that he bore that defeat with magnanimity, good feeling, and true nobility of character.' Mr. Villiers then proposed that the Marquis of Hartington should be requested to undertake the leadership of the Liberal party in the House of Commons. Mr. S. Morley, speaking for his own section of the House, seconded the motion, which was as warmly received as the previous resolution expressive of regret at Mr. Gladstone's retirement. Lord F. Cavendish, in responding for the noble Marquis, his brother, said that he would conscientiously, watchfully, and prudently devote his utmost strength and abilities to the service of the party, just as he was prepared to do had their choice fallen upon Mr. Forster or any other person. Mr. Bright referred to the many excellent qualities possessed by Lord Hartington.

Although his lordship lacked the great gifts of his predecessor—and his leadership cannot by any means be placed in comparison with that of his former chief—he lived to defeat the predictions of those who prophesied his failure, and to justify very largely the eulogium of Mr. Bright. Thus ended the brief interregnum in the Liberal leadership in the House of Commons.

Mr. Gladstone's appearances during the session were very infrequent. On more than one occasion, how-

ever, he addressed the House with something of his old fire. On the order for the second reading of Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burials Bill, on the 21st of April, he spoke in support of the measure. The bill proposed that as regards interment in a parish churchyard, the friends of the deceased should have the power to elect what service they would have read over them. Mr. Gladstone, in supporting the second reading of the bill, said he could not give an entirely silent vote. While it was undoubtedly a real grievance that the clergy should be under an obligation to perform the service of the Church of England in cases where they and the parties concerned concurred in the desire that it should not be read, the bill did not profess to deal with that question. His hon. and learned friend had said it was a grievance that those who did not belong to the Church of England should be debarred from the power of having read over their friends the rites distinguishing their own forms of religion, and in that view he (Mr. Gladstone) concurred; but if it were deemed expedient that this grievance should be remedied, provision ought to be made by the bill in case of the attendance of large crowds of persons at the churchyard to hear a service over the deceased, or the address of a popular preacher. The clergy were responsible for keeping the churchyards in order, and it was a serious question, if a churchyard were to receive damage, as to how the cost for repairing that damage should be met. It would be necessary to provide for that case (should the bill pass its second

reading) in committee, and, while he reserved that point, he should give a very cheerful and hearty support to the measure.

Mr. Cross spoke powerfully against the bill, and Mr. Bright still more eloquently in its favour, but it was rejected by a majority of 14, the numbers being —For the second reading, 234; against 248. This being a Wednesday sitting of the House, the numbers were unusually large. Only one Liberal, Mr. W. H. Foster, voted in the majority; while eight Conservatives—viz., Mr. S. Cave (a member of the Government), Mr. J. P. Corry, Mr. Russell Gurney, the Marquis of Hamilton, Mr. C. E. Lewis, Sir W. Stirling-Maxwell, Mr. C. W. Nevill, and the Hon. A. Walsh—voted in favour of the bill.

Sir Stafford Northcote's budget was viewed with mitigated interest upon its introduction; but on a consideration of Ways and Means in committee, Mr. Gladstone unexpectedly poured in his eloquence upon his successor like a flood. The principal feature in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals related to the National Debt; for the gradual reduction of which he suggested a new kind of sinking fund, involving an annual charge in every budget for £28,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer calculated that by 1885 £6,800,000 of debt would be paid off, and in thirty years' time £213,000,000.

Mr. Gladstone's chief objections were framed against the propositions with regard to post-office savings-banks and friendly societies' accounts, and

to the proposed National Debt Sinking Fund. He maintained that the surplus for the ensuing year was over-estimated, and with the deductions which ought to be expected for the charge for the deficiency in friendly societies and savings-banks funds and Irish education, it would be entirely eaten up. Further, the Government ought to have submitted the supplementary estimates before proceeding to strike a balance between the revenue and expenditure of the year, but instead of that it was proposed to vote £185,000 for the reduction of debt, of which sum Government did not possess a single shilling. Mr. Gladstone pointed out three modes of reducing the National Debt, the first by surplus of revenue over expenditure, secondly by terminable annuities, and thirdly by fixed appropriations beforehand. Much had been done towards reducing the debt, and they had not yet, he considered, done enough; but he objected to the present plan to reduce it, because it was unreal, and based upon the supposition that large surpluses would be received during the next thirty years. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had not one farthing of surplus himself, but presented an imaginary surplus of £500,000 for thirty years to come, for every one of which the surplus was founded on the assumption that future Chancellors of the Exchequer would do the reverse of what he had done. The world had produced wonders, but it never had, and never would, produce a Chancellor of the Exchequer who would have the courage to propose a new tax for the purpose

of maintaining a sinking fund. 'History certainly has not produced any such creation; no such *lusus naturæ* has as yet appeared; and I do not think that the Government of a party which justly prides itself on adherence to the traditions of the past, on learning lessons from antiquity, on avoiding vain theories, and keeping to the lessons of experience, ought to be the people to delude us by projects such as this into the marshes in which we shall be plunged, instead of remaining upon the safe high road by which we have hitherto travelled.' Mr. Gladstone concluded by describing the proposal as an attempt to revert to a scheme of proceeding which, however well intended, had been exploded under the combined action of authority and experience.

Sir Stafford Northcote, while failing to answer many of Mr. Gladstone's arguments, replied by quoting Mr. Gladstone, the author of the scheme of terminable annuities, in opposition to Mr. Gladstone, the denouncer of the establishment of an artificial sinking fund for the extinction of the debt. Another attack was subsequently made upon the sinking fund proposition, but the bill in which it was embodied was carried by 189 votes to 122.

Mr. Gladstone supported the Government in their financial proposals with regard to the expenses of the Prince of Wales's visit to India, and also addressed the House on one or two other questions of less general interest which arose during this session. In the autumn he met the Hawarden cottage tenantry, and spoke in

his usual felicitous vein, observing that there was nothing more characteristic of life in England than meetings of that description. But, for the time being, it is not in the right hon. gentleman's political or social, but in his controversial character that we must view him. The questions which were closely occupying him in his semi-retirement were of a religious nature, and these were shortly to receive a full and vigorous exposition.

CHAPTER XXV.

RITUALISM AND VATICANISM.

Ecclesiastical Controversy—Mr. Gladstone's Essay on Ritualism—Modern Roman Catholicism—'Is the Church of England worth Preserving?'—Mr. Gladstone's Answer—Pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees—Papal Infallibility—Effects of the Dogma variously viewed by Roman Catholics—Papal Claim to civil Allegiance—The Liberal Party and the Roman Catholics—Progress of Roman Catholicism—Replies to Mr. Gladstone's Pamphlet—*Vaticanism: An Answer to Reproofs and Replies*—Reiteration of previous Charges—Mr. Gladstone and Cardinal Newman—General Conclusion on the Vatican Claims.

In the recess of 1874 Mr. Gladstone continued the ecclesiastical controversy which had been initiated some months before in the House of Commons; but he now gave to it broader and deeper issues. There appeared in the October number of the *Contemporary Review* an essay by the ex-Premier, entitled 'What is Ritualism?' This article, which attained an immense circulation, excited the keenest interest. Mr. Gladstone gave this general definition of Ritualism:—'It is unwise, undisciplined reaction from poverty, from coldness, from barrenness, from nakedness; it is overlaying purpose with adventitious and obstructive incumbrance; it is departure from measure and from harmony in the annexation of appearance to substance, of the outward to the inward; it is the caricature of the beautiful; it is the conversion of

help into hindrances; it is the attempted substitution of the secondary for the primary aim, and the real failure and paralysis of both.' The writer himself had no personal sympathy with excessive ornamentation in Divine service as a religious principle, but he regarded the question of high ritual as one of æsthetic taste. Herein he was at variance with large numbers of the Protestant section of the community, who saw in Ritualism something more than a mere predilection for ornament and ritual—the inner significance beneath the outer forms. 'The truth is,' Mr. Gladstone observed in one place, 'that in the word Ritualism there is involved much more than the popular mind seems to suppose. The present movement in favour of ritual is not confined to Ritualists, neither is it confined even to Churchmen. It has been, when all things are considered, quite as remarkable among Nonconformists and Presbyterians; not because they have as much of it, but because they formerly had none, and because their system appeared to have been devised and adjusted in order to prevent its introduction, and to fix upon it even *in limine* the aspect of a flagrant departure from first principles.' Mr. Gladstone enlarged upon the fact that Dissenting chapels now had their crosses, their organs, richly-painted architecture, steeples, stained windows, elaborate chanting, &c.—all which, while perfectly true, had little or no bearing upon the dangers which Ritualism in the Church of England was believed to involve. The writer seemed almost disinclined to grapple with

the real tendencies and symbolisms of Ritualism. He admitted, however, that an important connection between high doctrine and high ritual is to be traced to a considerable extent in the Church of England. If we were not the better for more ritual, he observed, we were the worse for it. A general augmentation of ritual, such as that going on around men on every side, if it were without corresponding enhancement of devotion, meant more light, but not more love.

The following passage in Mr. Gladstone's essay roused the indignation of the Roman Catholics to the highest pitch:—'There is a question which it is the special purpose of this paper to suggest for consideration by my fellow-Christians generally, which is more practical, and of greater importance, as it seems to me, and has far stronger claims on the attention of the nation and of the rulers of the Church, than the question whether a handful of the clergy are or are not engaged in an utterly hopeless and visionary effort to Romanise the Church and people of England. At no time since the sanguinary reign of Mary has such a scheme been possible. But, if it had been possible in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, it would still have become impossible in the nineteenth; when Rome has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith; when she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused; when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing

his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another; and when she has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history. I cannot persuade myself to feel alarm as to the final issue of her crusades in England, and this, although I do not undervalue her great powers of mischief.' This extract demonstrated Mr. Gladstone's courage and strict loyalty to conscience; for the very members of the community of whom he thus indirectly spoke were those from whom he had but recently struck their long-endured political and religious fetters. Yet in quarters where the writer had once been regarded as the champion of religious and political freedom, he was now fiercely, bitterly, and unjustifiably assailed.

On the question of Ritualism, Mr. Gladstone expressed the view that 'the best touchstone for deciding what is wrong and defining what is right in the exterior apparel of Divine service, will be found in the holy desire and authoritative demand of the Apostle, "that the Church may receive edifying," rather than in abstract imagery of perfection on the one hand, or any form of narrow traditional prejudice on the other.' Beyond this, he formulated no general conclusions, but contented himself by reprinting the six resolutions in which, when the Public Worship Regulation Bill was before the House of Commons, he endeavoured to set forth what appeared to him to offer a safer and a wiser basis of legislation.*

To the numerous criticisms upon this essay, Mr.

* These Resolutions will be found in Chapter XXIII.

Gladstone published in the following year a general reply, entitled, 'Is the Church of England worth Preserving?'* The writer observed that there had been an expectation that his previous essay might untie or cut the knot of the questions which had been so warmly, if not fiercely, agitated during the preceding session of Parliament; but he had no such ambitious aim. The season being now tranquil, the question might at length be approached in the temper of the chamber, and not of the battle-field. He deprecated a secession from the National Church, for such an event would operate, with reference to its nationality, like a rent in a wall, 'which is mainly important, not by the weight of material it detaches, but by the discontinuity it leaves.' But it was not only the severance of the Church into two bodies which might precipitate disestablishment; obstinacy and exasperation of internal strife might operate yet more effectively towards the same end. He earnestly urged it upon all the members of the National Church that the more they studied her place and function in Christendom, the more they would find that her unity, qualified but real, was worth preserving. Coming to one of the capital and cardinal points of his case, he expressed his conviction that 'heavy will be the blame to those, be they who they may, who may at this juncture endeavour—whether by legislation or by judicial action, and whether by alteration of phrases or by needlessly attaching doctrinal significance to

* See the *Contemporary Review* for July, 1875.

the injunction or prohibition of ceremonial acts—to shift the balance of doctrinal expression in the Church of England.' To lessen the chances of a misapprehension of his arguments, Mr. Gladstone summed up, in the following propositions, the bearings and purport of his second essay:—

'I. The Church of this great nation is worth preserving, and for that end much may well be borne. II. In the existing state of minds and of circumstances, preserved it cannot be, if we now shift its balance of doctrinal expression, be it by an alteration of the Prayer Book (either way) in contested points, or be it by treating rubrical interpretations of the matters heretofore most sharply contested on the basis of "doctrinal significance." III. The more we trust to moral forces, and the less to penal proceedings (which are to a considerable extent exclusive one of the other), the better for the Establishment, and even for the Church. IV. If litigation is to be continued, and to remain, within the bounds of safety, it is highly requisite that it should be confined to the repression of such proceedings as really imply unfaithfulness to the national religion. V. In order that judicial decisions on ceremonial may habitually enjoy the large measure of authority, finality, and respect, which attaches in general to the sentences of our courts, it is requisite that they should have uniform regard to the rules and results of full historical investigation, and should, if possible, allow to stand over for the future matters insufficiently cleared, rather than decide them upon partial and fragmentary evidence.'

Mr. Gladstone gave himself no rest in the ecclesiastical warfare. Within one month from the publication of his essay on Ritualism, appeared from his pen a pamphlet on *The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance; a Political Expostulation.* His object now was to justify the assertions in the previous article which had been so much controverted by Roman Catholics. The propositions which occasioned the pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees, and which he now defended, were as follows:—'I. That Rome

has substituted for the proud boast of *semper eadem* a policy of violence and change in faith. II. That she has refurbished and paraded anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused. III. That no one can now become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another. IV. That Rome has equally repudiated modern thought and ancient history.' Mr. Gladstone passed over briefly the first and fourth of these propositions, as they belonged to the theological domain; but, in justifying them, he remarked that no one who had followed the course of the literature of the Romish Church during the past forty years could fail to be sensible of the change in its present tenor. More and more had the assertions of continuous uniformity of doctrine receded into scarcely penetrable shadow. More and more had another series of assertions, of a living authority, ever ready to open, adopt, and shape Christian doctrine according to the times, taken their place. With regard to the second branch of his subject, the writer cited a number of propositions respecting the liberty of the press, liberty of conscience, the Papal judgments and decrees, &c., the holders of which had been condemned by the See of Rome during his own generation, and especially within the last twelve or fifteen years. The third proposition by Mr. Gladstone was the most important, as it concerned the operation of the Romish dogmas on personal and private duty. To this point he

accordingly addressed himself at length. 'Is it, or is it not, true,' he demanded, 'that Rome requires a convert who now joins her to forfeit his moral and mental freedom, and to place his loyalty and civil duty at the mercy of another?' Without imputing to any one the moral murder of stifling conscience and conviction, he could not, for one, be surprised that the fermentation which was working through the mind of the Latin Church had as yet (elsewhere than in Germany *) but in few instances come to the surface. Mr. Gladstone proceeded to show that the declarations made by Irish bishops before committees of the Houses of Lords and Commons, previous to the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act, as well as decrees of councils and declarations of great ecclesiastical authorities in earlier and later times, were at variance with the new claims set up in 1870, and that the Roman Catholic authorities deprecated fifty years ago the very doctrines of allegiance which were now strongly asserted. All the propositions which had been formerly left to the individual conscience had now undergone a change, and been completely reversed. 'The Pope's Infallibility, when he speaks *ex cathedrâ* on faith and morals, has been declared, with the assent of the bishops of the Roman Church, to be an article of faith, binding on the conscience of every

* On more than one occasion it has been reported that Dr. von Döllinger (to whom Mr. Gladstone paid a high tribute) had made his submission on the doctrine of Papal Infallibility; but the learned Doctor himself has emphatically denied this to be the case.

Christian; his claim to the obedience of his spiritual subjects has been declared in like manner without any practical limit or reserve; and his supremacy, without any reserve of civil rights, has been similarly affirmed to include everything which relates to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world. And these doctrines, we now know on the highest authority, it is of necessity for salvation to believe.' After a close examination of the character and bearings of the doctrine of Papal Infallibility, Mr. Gladstone thus generally enforced the effects of the dogma:—

'Absolute obedience, it is boldly declared, is due to the Pope, at the peril of salvation, not alone in faith, in morals, but in all things which concern the discipline and government of the Church. Thus are swept into the Papal net whole multitudes of facts, whole systems of government, prevailing, though in different degrees, in every country of the world. Even in the United States, where the severance between Church and State is supposed to be complete, a long catalogue might be drawn of subjects belonging to the domain and competency of the State, but also undeniably affecting the government of the Church; such as, by way of example, marriage, burial, education, prison discipline, blasphemy, poor-relief, incorporation, mortmain, religious endowments, vows of celibacy and obedience. In Europe the circle is far wider, the points of contact and of interlacing almost innumerable. But on all matters respecting which any Pope may think proper to declare that they concern either faith, or morals, or the government or discipline of the Church, he claims, with the approval of a Council undoubtedly ecumenical in the Roman sense, the absolute obedience, at the peril of salvation, of every member of his communion. It seems not as yet to have been thought wise to pledge the Council in terms to the Syllabus and the Encyclical. That achievement is probably reserved for some one of its sittings yet to come. In the meantime it is well to remember that this claim in respect of all things affecting the discipline and Government of the Church, as well as faith and conduct, is lodged in open day by and in the reign of a Pontiff, who has condemned free speech, free writing, a free press, toleration of non-conformity, liberty of conscience, the study of civil and philosophical

matters in independence of the ecclesiastical authority, marriage unless sacramentally contracted, and the definition by the State of the civil rights (*jura*) of the Church; who has demanded for the Church, therefore, the title to define its own civil rights, together with a divine right to civil immunities, and a right to use physical force; and who has also proudly asserted that the Popes of the Middle Ages with their councils did not invade the rights of princes: as, for example, Gregory VII., of the Emperor Henry IV.; Innocent III., of Raymond of Toulouse; Paul III., in deposing Henry VIII.; or Pius V., in performing the like paternal office for Elizabeth.'

Before such incontrovertible facts as these, and others of equal significance within the public knowledge, it may well have seemed extraordinary to the writer—as indeed it must have done to thousands of other persons—that men of the high intellectual eminence of Cardinals Newman and Manning should have subscribed to the dogmas promulgated from the Vatican. We are driven to the conclusion that such a subscription would have been impossible save under the influence of the strong soporific of casuistry.

Mr. Gladstone demanded in the most specific form, and in the clearest terms, one of two things—either, 'I. A demonstration that neither in the name of faith, nor in the name of morals, nor in the name of the government or discipline of the Church, is the Pope of Rome able, by virtue of the powers asserted for him by the Vatican decree, to make any claim upon those who adhere to his communion, of such a nature as can impair the integrity of their civil allegiance; or else, II. That, if and when such claim is made, it will, even although resting on the definitions of the Vatican, be repelled and rejected; just as Bishop

Doyle, when he was asked what the Roman Catholic clergy would do if the Pope intermeddled with their religion, replied frankly, "The consequence would be that we should oppose him by every means in our power, even by the exercise of our spiritual authority."' In the absence of explicit assurances to this effect, Mr. Gladstone was compelled to adopt these conclusions:—'1. That the Pope, authorised by his Council, claims for himself the domain (*a*) of faith, (*b*) of morals, (*c*) of all that concerns the government and discipline of the Church. 2. That he in like manner claims the power of determining the limits of those domains. 3. That he does not sever them, by any acknowledged or intelligible line, from the domains of civil duty and allegiance. 4. That he therefore claims, and claims from the month of July, 1870, onwards, with plenary authority, from every convert and member of his Church, that he shall "place his loyalty and civil duty at the mercy of another:" that other being himself.'

The important question now arose that, being true, were the above propositions material? On this point, the author showed that there was not the smallest doubt the temporal power of the Popedom came within the meaning of the words used at the Vatican to describe the subjects on which the Pope was authorised to claim, under awful sanctions, the obedience of the 'faithful.' And it was possible we had here the key to the enlargement of the province of Obedience beyond the limits of Infallibility, and to

the introduction of the remarkable phrase *ad disciplinam et regimen Ecclesiæ*. With regard to the inquiry whether his propositions were proper to be set forth by the present writer, Mr. Gladstone answered, that for thirty years, under a great variety of circumstances, in office and as an independent member of Parliament, he had laboured with others to maintain and extend the civil rights of his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. The Liberal party had sometimes suffered heavily for its ardour in the pursuit of that policy. It was, therefore, only just that he should make the present declaration. Up to 1870, opinion in the Roman Church on all matters affecting civil liberty was free. Mr. Gladstone felt at that time that it was the first and paramount duty of the British Legislature to give to Ireland all that justice could demand. The last debt of the kind was paid by the Irish University Bill of 1873, and the rejection of that measure was due to the influence of the Roman Catholic prelacy of Ireland. 'From that time for ward I have felt that the situation was changed, and that important matters would have to be cleared by suitable explanations.'

The writer anticipated the inquiry which his observations would suggest, viz., 'Are they, then, a recantation and regret; and what are they meant to recommend as the policy of the future?' His reply was succinct and plain—of what the Liberal party had accomplished, by word or deed, in establishing the full civil equality of Roman Catholics, he regretted

nothing and recanted nothing. He admitted that during the last thirty years the Romish Church had made some progress, but its conquests had been chiefly —as might have been expected—among women.* Roman Catholicism had also made some progress amongst the upper classes. 'The original Gospel was supposed to be meant especially for the poor; but the Gospel of the nineteenth century from Rome courts another and less modest destination. If the Pope does not control more souls among us, he certainly controls more acres. The severance, however, of a certain number of lords of the soil from those who till it can be borne.' As to his own views and intentions in the future, which he described as of the smallest significance, the author declared that he should be guided, as heretofore, by the rule of maintaining equal civil rights, irrespectively of religious differences; and he should resist all attempts to exclude the members of the Roman Church from the benefit of that rule. Mr. Gladstone thus concluded this remarkable pamphlet:—

'The State will, I trust, be ever careful to leave the domain of religious conscience free, and yet to keep it to its own domain; and to allow neither private caprice, nor, above all, foreign arrogance to dictate to it on the discharge of its proper office. "England expects every man to do his duty;" and none can be so well prepared under all circumstances to exact its performance as that Liberal party which has done the work of justice alike for Nonconformists and for Papal dissidents, and whose members have so often, for the sake of that work, hazarded their credit with the

* Recent statistics prove that the progress of the Romish Church in the United Kingdom is by no means commensurate with the growth of the population, or with the progress of some other religious bodies.

markedly Protestant constituencies of the country. Strong the State of the United Kingdom has always been in material strength; and its moral panoply is now, we may hope, pretty complete. It is not then for the dignity of the Crown and people of the United Kingdom to be diverted from a path which they have deliberately chosen and which it does not rest with all the myrmidons of the Apostolic chamber either openly to obstruct, or secretly to undermine. It is rightfully to be expected, it is greatly to be desired, that the Roman Catholics of this country should do in the nineteenth century what their forefathers of England, except a handful of emissaries, did in the sixteenth, when they were marshalled in resistance to the Armada, and in the seventeenth, when, in spite of the Papal Chair, they sat in the House of Lords under the Oath of Allegiance. That which we are entitled to desire, we are entitled also to expect; indeed, to say we did not expect it would, in my judgment, be the true way of conveying an "insult" to those concerned. In this expectation we may be partially disappointed. Should those to whom I appeal, thus unhappily come to bear witness in their own persons to the decay of sound, manly, true life in their Church, it will be their loss more than ours. The inhabitants of these islands, as a whole, are stable, though sometimes credulous and excitable; resolute, though sometimes boastful; and a strong-headed and stout-hearted race will not be hindered, either by latent or by avowed dissents, due to the foreign influence of a caste, from the accomplishment of its mission in the world.'

Few pamphlets, or indeed works of any kind, have created so much public excitement, or attained such an enormous circulation, as this dissertation on the Vatican Decrees. In the course of a few weeks no fewer than one hundred and twenty thousand copies of the pamphlet had been disposed of, and replies innumerable appeared within the same period.* Mr.

* The following is a list of the chief writers of replies to Mr. Gladstone's essay:—Cardinal Manning, Dr. (Cardinal) Newman, Bishop Ullathorne, Bishop Vaughan, Monsignor Capel, Lord Petre, Lord Herries, Sir G. Bowyer, Lord Robert Montagu, a Monk of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate, Bishop Clifford, Rev. J. Coleridge, Rev. T. B. Parkinson, Monsignor Francesco Nardi, Mr. A. P. de Lisle, Canon Oakley, Mr. Marum, LL.B., Rev. John Curry, Mr. J. Stores Smith, and a Scottish Catholic Layman. A great number of anonymous replies were also published, as well as strictures upon Mr. Gladstone's conclusions, in the Ultramontane press.

Gladstone's essay performed one service at least—it demonstrated that there was a want of harmony between the members of the Romish Church themselves on the subject of the Vatican Decrees. For example, Lord Camoys, a well-known Catholic nobleman, declared that he concurred in Mr. Gladstone's views upon the new dogmas of the Church. History, common-sense, and his early instruction—said his lordship—forbade him to accept the astounding and novel doctrine of the personal Infallibility of the Pope, even though limited to the domain of faith and morals. He took exception to nothing in Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet but the term 'bloody,' as applied to Queen Mary. If the Vatican Decrees were enforced, serious difficulties would arise for the members of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world. Lord Acton, one of the most intellectual and enlightened of Catholics, claimed that he could be an orthodox Romanist, and yet resist the Vatican Decrees. Mr. Henry Petre likewise repudiated the high Ultramontane views. Other members of the Romish communion, however, such as Lord Herries, Lord Petre, Mr. Stourton, and Mr. Langdale, accepted the Decrees. Upon the appearance of the pamphlet, two prominent Italian journals, the *Osservatore* and the *Voce della Verità* could scarcely believe it possible that it was Mr. Gladstone who thus attacked the Holy See. They imagined that he had done this deed to clear himself of the suspicion of hidden Catholicism, and the former journal hinted that the essay might have been the

result of certain interviews which Mr. Gladstone was known to have had with Dr. von Döllinger.* Both journals further expressed a hope that the offender might be brought ultimately within the pale of the 'true Church,' a consummation scarcely likely to be realised.

Three months after the appearance of his first pamphlet, Mr. Gladstone issued a second, entitled *Vaticanism: an Answer to Reproofs and Replies.* Those who adopted the Ultramontane hypothesis had charged him with insulting the Roman Catholics of Great Britain. Mr. Gladstone repudiated all such intention, but in doing so reiterated his original charges as follows:—'The Vatican Decrees do, in the strictest sense, establish for the Pope a supreme command over loyalty and civil duty. To the vast majority of Roman Catholics they are, and in all likelihood will long in their carefully enveloped meaning remain, practically unknown. Of that small minority who have spoken, or fitted themselves to speak, a portion reject them. Another portion receive them with an express reserve, to me perfectly satisfactory, against all their civil consequences. Another portion seem to suspend their judgment until it is determined what is a free Council, what is moral unanimity, what are declarations

* Cardinal Manning and Bishop Ullathorne also supposed Dr. von Döllinger to be in some degree responsible for, or at least cognisant of, the tract on the Vatican Decrees; but Mr. Gladstone afterwards stated that the learned Doctor had no concern, direct or indirect, in the production or publication of the pamphlet, and that until it had gone to press he was even ignorant of its existence.

ex cathedrâ, whether there has been a decisive and binding promulgation so as to create a law, and whether the claim for an undue obedience need be considered until some act of undue obedience is asked. A very large class, as it seems to me, think they receive these Decrees, and do not. They are involved in inconsistency, and that inconsistency is dangerous.' He did not censure the supporters of the Decrees: the Alpha and Omega of his desire was to assail the system.

The writer paid a high compliment to his most distinguished antagonist, Dr. Newman. 'In my opinion,' he remarked, 'his secession from the Church of England has never yet been estimated among us at anything like the full amount of its calamitous importance. It has been said that the world does not know its greatest men; * neither, I will add, is it aware of the power and weight carried by the words and by the acts of those among its greatest men whom it does know. The Ecclesiastical historian will perhaps hereafter judge that this secession was a much greater event even than the partial secession of John Wesley, the only case of personal loss suffered by the Church of England since the Reformation, which can be at all compared with it in magnitude. I do not refer to its effect upon the mere balance of schools or parties in the Church; that is an inferior question. I refer to its effect upon the state of positive belief, and the attitude

* This thought, so often attributed to the wrong source, appears in Sir Henry Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, Act I., sc. 5, 'The world knows nothing of its greatest men.'

and capacities of the religious mind of England.' After having given an extraordinary impulse to the religious thought of England at a critical period, Dr. Newman lived to be the main, if involuntary, cause of disorganising it in a manner quite as remarkable.

With regard to the character of Dr. Newman's answer, and the replies of other acceptors of the Decrees who wrote in the same sense, Mr. Gladstone could not refrain from saying that the immediate purpose of his appeal had been attained, in so far as that the loyalty of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects in the mass remained evidently untainted and secure. Dr. Newman's letter to the Duke of Norfolk Mr. Gladstone pronounced to be of the highest interest as a psychological study. 'Whatever he writes, whether we agree with him or not, presents to us this great attraction as well as advantage, that we have everywhere the man in the work, that his words are the transparent covering of his nature. If there be obliquity in them, it is purely intellectual obliquity; the work of an intellect sharp enough to cut the diamond, and bright as the diamond which it cuts. How rarely it is found, in the wayward and inscrutable records of our race, that with these instruments of an almost superhuman force and subtlety, robustness of character and energy of will are or can be developed in the same extraordinary proportions, so as to integrate that structure of combined thought and action which makes life a moral whole!' But his exclusive duty now was concerned with the learned Doctor's tract, and on the general

question he must avow that he did not feel the same security for the future as for the present. He could not overlook indications, even in this country, that the proceedings of Vaticanism threatened to become a source of practical inconvenience. With respect to Archbishop Manning, that prelate's satisfactory views on the present rule of civil allegiance had not prevented him from giving his countenance as a responsible editor to the lucubrations of a gentleman who denied liberty of conscience, and asserted the right to persecute when there was the power; a right which, indeed, the Archbishop himself had not disclaimed. But apart from personal questions, do what men might in checking external developments, it was not in their power to neutralise the mischiefs of the wanton aggression of 1870 upon the liberties which up to that epoch had been allowed to private Christians in the Roman communion. 'Even in those parts of Christendom where the Decrees and the present attitude of the Papal See do not produce or aggravate open broils with the civil power, by undermining moral liberty they impair moral responsibility, and silently, in the succession of generations, if not in the lifetime of individuals, tend to emasculate the vigour of the mind.'

In the body of this second essay, Mr. Gladstone proceeded further to sustain and prove his two main propositions—that Rome had reproduced for active service those doctrines of former times which she was fondly thought to have disused; and that the Pope

now claims, with plenary authority, from every convert and member of his Church, that he shall place his loyalty and civil duty at the mercy of another, viz., himself. The writer adduced proofs to show that his account of the contents of the Syllabus was accurate, and that he had understated, not overstated, its authority. In the code of Vaticanism, it was unquestionably entitled to obedience. The other topics treated were the Vatican Council and the Infallibility of the Pope, the revived claims of the Pope, the Vatican Council and obedience to the Pope, warrant of allegiance according to the Vatican, and the intrinsic nature and conditions of the Papal Infallibility decreed in the Vatican Council. Mr. Gladstone brought forward a variety of arguments and proofs in justification of the following general conclusions or assertions:—'1. That the position of Roman Catholics has been altered by the decrees of the Vatican on Papal Infallibility, and in obedience to the Pope. 2. That the extreme claims of the Middle Ages have been sanctioned, and have been revived without the warrant or excuse which might in those ages have been shown for them. 3. That the claims asserted by the Pope are such as to place civil allegiance at his mercy. 4. That the State and people of the United Kingdom had a right to rely on the assurances they had received, that Papal Infallibility was not, and could not become, an article of faith in the Roman Church, and that the obedience due to the Pope was limited by laws independent of his will.' Here are

the closing words of the author's eloquent peroration: —'As freedom can never be effectually established by the adversaries of that Gospel which has first made it a reality for all orders and degrees of men, so the Gospel never can be effectually defended by a policy which declines to acknowledge the high place assigned to liberty in the counsels of Providence, and which, upon the pretext of the abuse that like every other good she suffers, expels her from its system. Among the many noble thoughts of Homer, there is not one more noble or more penetrating than his judgment upon slavery. "On the day," he says, "that makes a bondman of the free,

Wide-seeing Zeus takes half the man away."

He thus judges, not because the slavery of his time was cruel—for evidently it was not—but because it *was* slavery. What he said against servitude in the social order, we may plead against Vaticanism in the spiritual sphere; and no cloud of incense which zeal or flattery, or even love, can raise should hide the disastrous truth from the vision of mankind.'

In addition to the publication of these essays on the subject of Vaticanism, Mr. Gladstone contributed a vigorous and searching criticism upon the speeches of Pope Pius IX. to the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1875. The writer's indignation at the Papal assumptions finds full vent in this article, which reviews the chief events in the career of the late Pope, and, in certain aspects, leaves him exposed to the derision of humanity.

It may, perhaps, be taken for granted, that of all forms of controversy the religious is the least effectual in winning converts from one form of belief to another, and to those principles which the respective combatants believe to be in accordance with reason, truth, and justice. Many men practically decline to submit their individual religion to the tests demanded of it; and, therefore, amongst Roman Catholics, Mr. Gladstone's controversial writings may have had little effect, notwithstanding the cogency of their arguments. But to the rest of the world, at any rate, these essays have afforded substantial aid in demonstrating the hollowness of the Papal pretensions, as well as their insidious and dangerous character.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. GLADSTONE'S FINANCIAL POLICY.

Beneficial Results of Mr. Gladstone's Financial Legislation—Testimony of Sir Stafford Northcote—Review of Twenty Years of Financial Policy—The Budget of 1853—Compared with Sir Robert Peel's Budget of 1842—The Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Necessity for Retrenchment—Exposition of Mr. Gladstone's Work in Finance—His Characteristics as a Financier—The ex-Premier on the Financial Policy of the Beaconsfield Administration—Liberal and Conservative Expenditure compared—The General Expenditure of the Country—A growing Deficiency—Taxes remitted by the Gladstone Administration—Results of the present War Policy.

THE various budgets for which Mr. Gladstone was directly responsible have been dealt with at length in the order of their introduction into the House of Commons; but it remains now to offer some observations upon the general character and effect of the ex-Premier's financial policy, as well as to contrast it briefly with the policy pursued by his successors. In fulfilling this task, we are fortunately able to fall back upon the compilations and statistics of persons whose authority in matters of finance will scarcely be disputed.

First, we shall call as a witness to the beneficial results of Mr. Gladstone's financial legislation no less a person than his whilom pupil, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. In an able, and—so far as finance *can* be made so—interesting review of twenty impor-

tant years of financial policy, viz., those extending from 1842 to 1861 inclusively, Sir Stafford Northcote shows the great changes which have been effected in national finance.* Although the right hon. baronet does not, for personal reasons stated, enter largely into a consideration of the very important budget of 1860, his general conclusions upon the financial measures of that and previous years will sufficiently answer our purpose. The period reviewed commences with Sir Robert Peel's imposition of the income-tax in 1842, and extends to the repeal of the paper duties in 1861. As the writer justly remarks, the fortunes of the income-tax, and the work done by its aid, 'give a kind of dramatic unity to this period, which would alone be sufficient to make the study of it interesting; but in addition to this, we have, in the course of these twenty years, seen our financial system exhibited in all its bearings; and examples have been given of almost every kind of financial problem.' Passing over the great financial measures of 1842 and 1845—with which Sir Robert Peel's Ministry was associated, and which formed the starting-point of a new financial *régime*—we will come to the year 1853, one of the most important of the whole period dealt with by Sir Stafford Northcote. Mr. Gladstone's analysis of the income-tax in his budget of this year has already been referred to in detail. As his successor says, 'It is almost impossible to condense this portion of Mr.

* *Twenty Years of Financial Policy.* By Sir Stafford H. Northcote, Bart., M.P. for Stamford. London, 1862.

Gladstone's speech; so consummate is the skill with which the topics are arranged and presented to his audience. Wholly apart from the merits of the scheme he proposes, the speech itself, and especially this part of it, will repay the most careful study as a specimen of persuasive reasoning.' On the general character of this remarkable budget, the same writer observes, 'We miss in it the caution, which is perhaps the most striking feature of the financial plans of Sir Robert Peel; while in its place we meet with a boldness of conception, a love of effect, and a power of producing it, such as we do not find even in the remarkable budget of 1842. Yet it would be unjust to Mr. Gladstone to find fault with him on this account. When we look at the circumstances of the case, we cannot but feel that it was of the utmost importance to the financial prosperity of the country that a stand should be made against that of which Mr. Disraeli had so justly complained—the tendency of the leaders of public opinion to decry and render impossible every mode of raising the necessary revenues; and . . . we may well believe that nothing less than a striking scheme like that which Mr. Gladstone brought forward would at that time have sufficed to save the finances from the most serious confusion.' Moreover, 'had not events occurred which led to a large increase of our expenditure before the arrival of 1860, his calculations would have been nearly or quite verified; that is, provided the House had abstained for the whole seven years from demanding any new remis-

sions of taxation.' With regard to the Crimean war, Sir S. Northcote observes that it revealed to us many imperfections in our military system; but the strain on our finances brought to light nothing but their soundness and their vigour. 'Could we have borne that strain as we did,' he asks, 'if it had not been for the life which Sir Robert Peel first infused, and which Mr. Gladstone afterwards renewed, in our fiscal system, and but for which 1854 might have found us struggling with an overwhelming deficiency, or inextricably entangled in the toils which must attend a reconstruction of the income-tax? It was well for England, in this respect at least, that we had set our house in order before the day of trial came upon us.' The ex-Premier could desire no better tribute than this to his capacity as a Finance Minister. In assessing the general result of the financial policy pursued from 1842 to 1861—in which Mr. Gladstone had so large a share—Sir Stafford Northcote arrives at the conclusion that the condition of every portion of the community has been greatly improved by the new policy.

The Beaconsfield Administration will be distinguished in the records of posterity for (*inter alia*) its lavish expenditure of public money. We therefore commend to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1879 the following admirable passage on the necessity for retrenchment written by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1862:—

'Mr. Gladstone, in his budget speech of 1860, pointed out that between 1842 and 1859 the wealth of the country had increased about 28½ per cent.

and the expenditure in the same time about 27 per cent. Now this is a serious consideration; and it is made the more serious when we remember that Mr. Gladstone at the same time showed that the increase in the expenditure had been advancing at a greatly accelerated rate of speed in the last six years of the term of which he was speaking, and that the portion of the public expenditure which is, so to speak, optional and subject to the control of the public, had in those years risen by no less than 58 per cent. Nothing can be more natural than that a nation should, like an individual, increase its expenditure as its wealth increases; but it is to be borne in mind that while nothing is easier or pleasanter than to expand one's outlay upon the necessaries and conveniences of life, nothing is more painful or more difficult than to contract it; and that should our prosperity encounter any check, the habit of large expenditure which we have allowed to gain upon us may prove a very inconvenient one.'

The maintenance of the honour of England must ever be one of the paramount aims of our statesmen, but if it be even now denied that a large portion of the national expenditure during the past four or five years has been unnecessary and unjustifiable, what will history have to say upon the subject? Sir Stafford Northcote, too, has departed, in many respects—notably in regard to the methods of meeting our liabilities—from principles which have received the sanction of all the ablest English financiers.

One of the clearest expositions of Mr. Gladstone's work in finance appeared some years ago in the *Fortnightly Review*.* The writer, Mr. Giffen, points out that before 1842 'the condition of the country was alarming, in a way we cannot easily imagine. Successive deficits in the revenue were but a feeble index to the complaints of suffering which arose from every

* 'Mr. Gladstone's Work in Finance.' By Robert Giffen. *Fortnightly Review*, Jan. 1869.

quarter. The country was standing still with a vast gulf between the rich and the poor, and political discontent assuming the most threatening forms. The visible beginning of a change was the Free Trade experiment—the abolition of the burdens which those concerned at the time felt to be hindering their business.' Statesmen were called upon to consider the assistance to be given by finance in ameliorating the condition of the masses of the community. Premising that if a financier can increase the wealth of the mass of the community by reducing taxation, or by other means in his power, he should bend all his energies to the task, Mr. Giffen thus proceeded to answer the question what share Mr. Gladstone had taken in the reduction of the national burdens:—

'The respective merits of the financiers of the time can almost be measured by the bulk of their contributions to the work. Tried in this manner, Mr. Gladstone's contributions are confessedly the largest of the whole twenty-six years since 1842. All that is characteristic in the last sixteen is exclusively his. There have been other Chancellors of the Exchequer—Sir George Lewis, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Ward Hunt—but, as fortune or management would have it, they have contributed almost nothing among them to the work of the period. Mr. Disraeli's insignificant contribution in the budget of 1867 is literally almost the only thing which Mr. Gladstone cannot claim. It is obvious, too, that a very large share of the work has been got into these sixteen years. Of the four great stages into which the whole period may be divided, two at least are included in the later time. To Sir Robert Peel belongs the first step in 1842, and the second step in 1845; but the stages of 1853 and 1860 were marked with equal distinctness, and were hardly of less importance. To take the test of the amount of taxation reduced, it appears that in the years 1842-52 the balance of remission was £7,000,000, while in 1853-66 the balance is £13,000,000. This, too, was in spite of the fact that the expenditure in the former years was only between fifty and fifty-two millions; whereas in the latter period it has been between sixty-five and

seventy millions. The proportionate merit of Mr. Gladstone is not so great as the figures show, because all our figures are now bigger, and the taxes reduced would not have been so productive when they came to be reduced but for Sir Robert Peel. They are proof, nevertheless, that a great deal was done; and when the details are looked at, the conclusion is not less favourable. To the first period necessarily belongs the redress of the worst evils in the old system—the abolition of export duties, of import duties on the raw material of manufacture, and of certain oppressive excise duties, such as that on glass; above all, the destruction of the Corn Laws, with the reduction of duties on other articles of food. Still, how incomplete the work would have been without Mr. Gladstone's contribution. There were no export duties left for him to touch, but every other feature of Sir Robert Peel's work is found in his. The abolition of the excise on soap and on paper released two home industries of the first magnitude, and were quite as important measures in that kind as the repeal of the duty on glass. Mr. Gladstone, again, first reduced yet further the customs on articles of food, and finally abolished every duty of that kind, with the single exception of the shilling duty on corn. Sir Robert Peel, besides, only began the total abolition of duties, his main steps being merely to make reductions. Mr. Gladstone has swept the tariff clear, leaving only certain charges on great articles of consumption, with supporting duties on a few articles besides.'

The writer gives the palm, on the whole, to Mr. Gladstone's work, as being one of greater complexity; and observes that 'where the indications were less sure, the personal merit of success was proportionately greater.' Sir Robert Peel wrought with the one lever of the income-tax, while Mr. Gladstone devised more than one subsidiary aid, like the extension of the succession duty to real and settled property, and the increase of the spirit duties. Mr. Giffen shows the fallacy of the popular impression that the progressive increase in the revenue is the whole secret of success; when financiers have surpluses to give away, it is thought they cannot go far wrong. Mr. Gladstone's great merit has been the discovery of new sources of

income of a comparatively unobjectionable kind, which solved the problem of meeting the high expenditure of the years that were to come, without stopping the work of reform. The extension of the succession duty to real and settled property was an idea belonging exclusively to Mr. Gladstone, and a like proposal had not been made since the days of Mr. Pitt. With respect to the peculiar qualities of the ex-Premier as a financier, the same writer observes that 'it is a remarkable alliance with love of subtlety and detail, and with abounding activity and energy, which has introduced into Gladstonian budgets those brilliant devices from which common people are apt to revolt. But Mr. Gladstone, with all his foundation of commonplaceness and steady popular judgment, would yet have been very little in finance without his love of detail and wonderful knowledge of expedients. To a very large extent this only means that he has the enthusiasm of his occupation. People succeed in nothing unless they give their days and nights to it, and Mr. Gladstone has given to finance the sweat and toil of many years of his life. People rather like in him an exposition of minute detail which hardly another financier could make tolerable.' The prosperity of the country was largely aided by Mr. Gladstone's financial legislation, and the legitimate developments of that prosperity and that legislation, were those extensive remissions of taxation which distinguished his occupancy of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

With regard to the financial policy which has

prevailed since Mr. Gladstone's retirement from office, the right hon. gentleman himself has recently described it in an article entitled 'The Country and the Government.' * Complaining of the pretensions and theatrical policy of the existing Administration, he remarked that it could not be had without paying heavily for the decorations and stage accompaniments. 'The stock of courage which our Ministers possessed was lavishly expended, partly in act and partly in word, for the management of their transactions beyond sea. The consequence has been that for domestic duties, and for the first of all domestic duties, after allegiance to the Throne—namely, the duty of maintaining a just balance between income and charge, and of relieving the future at least by moderate present sacrifices—they have not so much as an ounce of courage left. The result has been a financial policy such as all the Ministries of the last forty years would have disdained; and, what is even worse, the invention of a group of false financial doctrines, unknown to our annals, to cover the shortcomings, the miscarriages, and the malpractices of recent finance.' Mr. Gladstone also pointed out that in some cases the advocates of the Ministry had resorted to the simple but effectual plan of pure falsification. One journal, for example, stated that the expenditure of 1873–4 was £77,044,852, and the income £76,788,167 —thus showing a deficiency of £256,685; whereas the expenditure was £76,466,000, and the revenue

* See the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1879.

£77,335,000, showing a surplus of £869,000. Another journal affirmed that since the Conservatives had been in office they had paid in Alabama claims £3,196,875; whereas the Alabama claims were paid in 1873–4, the last year of Liberal finance. A table had also been constructed—and it had even been employed by a Minister of State—showing, not the comparative expenditure, but the comparative taxation of the Liberal and Conservative Governments since the year 1869. This table gave as the amount of taxation per head for the five years during which the Liberal Government were in office £10 7s. 0¾d., and the amount per head for the five years during which the present Government has been in office as £10 3s. 0¾d., leaving a balance of 4s. per head in favour of Lord Beaconsfield. 'Upon this principle,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'any scapegrace in St. James's-street, with a small annual allowance, and an immeasurable length of unpaid bills, could prove himself, by showing the small amount he had *paid* from year to year, to be the most thrifty of men. The economy of a State is to be measured not by the liabilities it discharges, but by the liabilities it incurs.' The writer further pointed out that the Liberal Government began with a high taxation because of the high scale of charge it inherited from the Tories, and of the four millions or thereabouts due for the Abyssinian war, which was also handed over to them. 'This rate of taxation they reduced by more than two shillings per head, while applying large sums to the reduction of debt;

while encountering the highest prices for supplies that had ever been known; and while meeting a large increase of military expenditure in 1870, which was forced upon them solely by the policy of two great foreign powers.' The Tories, on the contrary, began with a low taxation, and reversed the policy; and since they came into office in 1874 the rate of taxation per head has steadily gone up year by year. Had the table, moreover, been drawn upon the true basis—viz., that of expenditure—the real increase of charge since the first year of the present Government would have been about 4s. per head.

Let us now look at the general expenditure of the country. In 1873-4—less the Alabama claims, which had no connection with the transactions of the year—the gross annual expenditure stood at £73,270,000; in 1878-9 it stood at £85,407,000. Excluding charges of collection, the amount for 1873-4 was £66,800,000, and for 1878-9, £77,457,000; showing an increase of £10,657,000. Looking only to that portion of the charge which is both annual and subject generally to the option of Parliament, Mr. Gladstone stated the case thus:—Last year of Liberal expenditure, less Alabama claims, 1873-4, £41,853,000; last year of Tory expenditure, 1878-9, £51,817,000—showing an increase of £9,964,000, or, in round numbers, ten millions of money, 'mainly due to the policy and the profusion of the Ministry.' This sum represents a proportional augmentation of nearly twenty per cent., or one-fifth, in five years. 'Aided by the heavy fall

in the prices of all materials requiring to be purchased for the public service to the extent of £1,600,000, the Government at the commencement of the year presented military and naval estimates which showed reductions of £2,008,000, and £1,524,000 respectively; desirous obviously that the gray hairs of this Parliament might go down to the grave in better odour than that which environed it in the days of its vigour. But it is now evident that the demands of the Zulu war must dissipate the fond expectations thus raised. The charge (still unknown) for 1879-80 is more likely to exceed than to fall short of that for 1878-9; and the choice before us seems to lie between heavy and discreditable deficit, and fresh taxation. The annual surpluses available for the reduction of debt, which averaged more than three and a quarter millions during the five years of the late Government, sank during the first three years of the present Ministry to half a million, during the two last have been replaced by deficits of £2,640,000 and £2,292,000 respectively.

Such is, in brief, Mr. Gladstone's financial indictment against the Beaconsfield Administration, drawn up from the Statistical Abstracts and Parliamentary Papers. But the *Economist*, a recognised authority on questions of finance, is equally damaging in its criticisms, though it writes from a somewhat different point of view. 'A certain deficiency at the end of the year 1879 of six and a half millions,' says this journal, 'and the possibility of a still larger shortcoming, is what

we have to look forward to. Sir Stafford Northcote's schemes for gradually reducing the floating debt have thus all come to nought. Instead of a diminution, each year sees an augmentation of the uncovered balances. In April, 1878, the amount unprovided for was about £2,000,000; in April, 1879, it had grown to £5,350,000; and now it is reaching up to nearly £7,000,000. This is the result of the new system of postponing liabilities, and in the face of this experience the resolution of Sir Stafford Northcote to raise the nominal deficit for the year by the issue of another £1,200,000 Exchequer bonds is much to be regretted. Already the practice of meeting the cost of the little wars to which we are always exposed, by additions to debt, instead of out of revenue, has burdened us with a mass of floating liabilities, which in certain conditions of the money market may prove a source of danger. It has betrayed us, moreover, into acts of national meanness of which we may well feel ashamed. No one can doubt but that for the unsatisfactory condition of our finances, India would never have been saddled with the expense of a war which those by whom it was originated have declared to be waged for Imperial purposes, and should therefore have been met out of Imperial funds. The sooner we get back to the old practice of meeting the expenditure of each year out of that year's revenue, the better will it be in every way.' This has always been Mr. Gladstone's cardinal financial principle, but the present Government are in favour of a procrastinating policy, forgetting that if the Liberals should ultimately

have to make good their defects, and to bring back the country to sound principles of finance, the obloquy must still attach to themselves. The ostrich does not save himself from impending danger by hiding his head in the sand.

The money saved during Mr. Gladstone's Administration enabled a reduction of twelve and a half millions to be made in the annual taxation, such remissions being a notorious cause of national prosperity and an elastic revenue. The increase of public expenditure since the Conservatives came into power in 1874 has been at the average rate of nearly three millions annually. But not only did the five Liberal budgets of the Gladstone Administration remit taxes to the amount of nearly £13,000,000, but there was left for the Conservatives a surplus of several millions. The Conservatives, on the other hand, in the five years they have held office, have imposed charges to the amount of upwards of £5,000,000 beyond the amount of the Liberal remissions. The deficit which has been created is enormous, and we have not yet arrived at its culminating point. According to the *Statistical Abstract of the United Kingdom*, published by the Board of Trade, the following figures show the actual amount of national expenditure for which the Liberals were responsible during five years of power under Mr. Gladstone:—1870, £68,864,752; 1871, £69,548,539; 1872, £71,490,020; 1873, £70,714,448; and 1874, £76,456,510. The expenditure for 1874 embraced a sum of upwards of £3,000,000 paid in settlement

of the Alabama Claims. The expenditure during five years of Tory rule has been as follows:—1875, £74,328,040; 1876, £76,620,773; 1877, £78,125,227; 1878, £82,403,495; and 1879, £85,407,789. In lieu of Mr. Gladstone's magnificent surpluses, moreover, we have (as already remarked) a large deficit, now amounting to several millions. The army and navy estimates during the Liberal *régime*—that is, from 1869 to 1873—yield a total of £149,273,630; the same estimates during the Conservative *régime*—viz., from 1874 to 1878—gave a total of £166,013,989. Nor does this excess of nearly seventeen millions include the enormous sums recently voted for war purposes. In thirteen years during which the Liberals held office between 1857 and 1878, they repealed or reduced taxes to the amount of £42,816,329, and laid on taxes to the amount of only £3,050,086, showing a balance in their favour of £39,766,243. The Conservatives, in their nine years of power during the same period, reduced taxation by £6,270,123 only; while they imposed new taxes to the amount of £12,374,050, thus leaving a balance against them of £6,103,927. Now we do not mean to imply that all the recent enormous additions to the public expenditure could have been averted; the Tories have in some respects been unfortunate since they came into office; but a Liberal Administration would in all probability have saved us from much of this expenditure. There has been a reckless profusion in consequence of the war spirit that has obtained such dominance over us, and

it is not alone in the burdens of taxation we are feeling it; industry must be crippled for a long period as a consequence of this policy. Apart from the moral aspects of the question, hunting Zulus is an expensive pursuit; and as regards our Afghan difficulties, it may yet unfortunately be discovered that we are only on the threshold of grave and terrible events. All will welcome a settlement of our foreign complications favourable to ourselves; but it is the opinion of many that, in happier seasons, and when the results of 'Imperialism' are calmly reviewed, our recent policy will receive the strongest condemnation.

Meanwhile, it would be well if the above facts and figures could reach the entire body of the people of the three kingdoms. If they like the picture, and do not object to the enormous loss of blood and treasure involved in wars which might probably have been avoided, and which are certainly not amongst the most creditable wars in which England has engaged, the responsibility lies with them. But the financial history of the past twenty years should surely have taught the nation the vast superiority of a policy of peace, progress, and retrenchment, over that of a 'spirited foreign policy.' War is sometimes necessary for the maintenance of national rights and the vindication of national honour, and no true Englishman would be wanting in patriotism at such a crisis; but —we again urge—who would venture to affirm that History will acquit England of all responsibility for the wars she has recently waged?

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Mr. Gladstone's Views on the Eastern Question—The Rising in Herzegovina—The Andrassy Note—Conference of the Emperors at Berlin—England and the Berlin Memorandum—The Massacres in Bulgaria—Indignation in England—Servia and Montenegro declare War against Turkey—The English Fleet despatched to Besika Bay—Mr. Disraeli and the 'Bulgarian Atrocities'—Mr. Baring's Corroboration of the Outrages in Bulgaria—Publication of Mr. Gladstone's Pamphlet—The Writer's Demands—The ex-Premier's Address on Blackheath—The Policy of Europe—Necessity for Co-operation between England and Russia—Lord Beaconsfield at Aylesbury—Turkey agrees to an Armistice—The Constantinople Conference—Great Meeting at St. James's Hall on the Eastern Question—Speech of Mr. Gladstone—Letter from Mr. Carlyle—Failure of the Conference at Constantinople—Parliamentary Debates on the Eastern Question—Mr. Gladstone's Reply to Mr. Chaplin—Appeal on the General Question—Protocol signed at the English Foreign Office—Rejected by Turkey—Declaration of War by Russia—Great Debate in the House of Commons—Mr. Gladstone's Five Resolutions—Eloquent Speech of the Mover—The First Resolution defeated—The ex-Premier at Birmingham and Holyhead—Elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University—Course of the Russo-Turkish War—Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone—Another Debate in the House of Commons—Panic on the Stock Exchange—Treaty of San Stefano—The Bases of Peace—Objected to by England.

PERHAPS no period in Mr. Gladstone's career has been the subject of so much animadversion as that in which he made his series of public utterances upon the complications in Eastern Europe. It has frequently been urged against the late leader of the Liberal party that his views upon foreign affairs were narrow, contracted, and impracticable; and yet it was by no means unreasonable to suppose that his much-canvassed 'bag

and baggage' policy with regard to Turkey would prove to be the only permanent solution of the Eastern Question, as it specially affected the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It is not our purpose, however, to show either that Mr. Gladstone has invariably been right, or that his opponents have invariably been wrong, in the attitude they have respectively assumed at the various stages of this vexed and intricate question. The time is too near for a final deliverance upon the subject, and more than any other, probably, it is one which it will be wise to leave to the unbiassed judgment and the calm arbitrament of history. At the same time, we cannot pass to the mere retrospect of facts which it is our intention only to give, without recalling to general recollection how closely many of the earliest predictions of Mr. Gladstone upon the Eastern Question have been verified and fulfilled.

Before dealing with those addresses in which Mr. Gladstone roused in so remarkable a degree the feelings of the English people in favour of the oppressed nationalities of Turkey, we will rapidly recapitulate the events which led to the great conflict in the East of Europe. Turkish oppression, which had long prevailed in its worst forms, at length resulted in an outbreak in Herzegovina. This insurrectionary movement began on the 1st of July, 1875, and, without tracing its gradual stages, it will be sufficient to state that it ultimately led to an open and formal conflict with the Ottoman Government. This movement was as the letting out of waters, and in a short

time the Eastern Question was re-opened in all its fulness. The cruel oppression of the Herzegovinian peasantry by their Mahommedan landlords, was the first stage in the new phase of that question for which the wisest diplomatic minds in Europe saw no settlement, save by the adoption of thoroughly root measures. Hostilities ensued, and in January, 1876, the Herzegovinians gained a victory over the Turks. A few days later, the Austrian statesman, Count Andrassy, drew up a Note containing a scheme of reforms in favour of the insurgents of Herzegovina; and this being communicated to the Porte by the Austrian, Russian, and German Ambassadors, it was accepted by the Sultan's Government on the 6th of February. Early in May, however, another insurrection broke out in several Bulgarian villages, and this was followed a week afterwards by the atrocities at Batak, committed by Bashi-Bazouks—atrocities which sent a thrill of horror throughout Europe. Affairs had become so serious that, on the 11th of May, the Emperor of Russia, accompanied by Prince Gortschakoff, arrived at Berlin to confer with Count Andrassy, the Emperor William, and Prince Bismarck, on the Eastern Question generally. On the 22nd, in both Houses of the English Parliament, Ministers announced that they had been unable to concur in the Memorandum drawn up at the Berlin Conference—an intimation which caused considerable surprise throughout the country. The public feeling was not calmed when it became known two days later that the British fleet in the

Mediterranean had been ordered to Besika Bay. By the 28th of June the insurrection in Bulgaria was suppressed, and on the 10th the Sultan Abdul Aziz was deposed at Constantinople. He was succeeded by Murad V., who issued an imperial Hatt, stating that he desired a Government which should best guarantee the liberties of all. In consequence of the changed condition of affairs, on the 9th of June Mr. Disraeli stated in the House of Commons that the Berlin Memorandum would not be presented, and that the steps taken by her Majesty's Government in Turkish affairs were such as he believed would lead to the maintenance of an honourable peace.

How far these optimist views were justified was speedily shown by events which we now look back upon with horror. Within a fortnight only from Mr. Disraeli's declaration, England was moved with indignation at the revelations published in the *Daily News*, from its correspondent at Constantinople, respecting the massacres in Bulgaria by the Moslems. Thousands of innocent men, women, and children, it was stated, had been slaughtered; at least sixty villages had been utterly destroyed; the most terrible scenes of violence had been committed; and a district once the most fertile in the empire had been completely ruined. Crimes had been committed on a scale unknown in Europe for many years. Forty girls were shut up in a straw loft and burnt, and outrages of the most fearful description were committed upon hundreds of unfortunate captives.

While the whole heart of Great Britain was stirred, it was left for an English Prime Minister to grow jocular upon cruelties and sufferings almost unparalleled in the world's history. In the House of Commons, in answer to an interpellation upon the Bulgarian massacres, Mr. Disraeli expressed his belief that the outrages committed by the Turkish troops had been exaggerated; while as to the torture of impalement (which had caused universal disgust and anger), he had only to remark that an Oriental people generally terminated their connection with culprits in a more expeditious manner! Mr. Disraeli's belief, however, was as unfounded as his witticism was callous and heartless, for the substantial accuracy of the statements in the *Daily News* was afterwards duly attested.

Before the end of June, Prince Milan left Belgrade and joined his army on the frontier. In a proclamation issued to his people, he declared that, since the insurrection broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation of Servia had become intolerable. Notwithstanding his neutral attitude, the Porte had continued to send military forces and savage hordes to the Servian frontier. 'To remain longer in moderation,' said the Prince, 'would be weakness.' The Montenegrins next united with Servia in declaring war against Turkey. The Servians were defeated near Novi Bazar, in Bosnia, on the 6th of July, with considerable loss. It is unnecessary to follow the fortunes of the warfare now set on foot between Turkey and the insurrec-

tionary provinces. Debates in the House of Commons on the progress of events in the East were of frequent occurrence, and on the 30th of July—in answer to Mr. Gladstone, who had defended the Crimean war, and expressed his strong desire for the restoration of the European concert in the East—Mr. Disraeli explained that the despatch of the Fleet to Besika Bay implied no threat to anybody: it was not sent to protect the Turkish Empire, but the British Empire. On the following day Mr. Gladstone again returned to the subject, and Mr. Disraeli rejoined that the Berlin Memorandum had nothing to do with the present war, which was one of aggression. The policy of the English Government, he said, had been approved by the other Powers. Lord Derby and other members of the Ministry had previously defined this policy as one of strict neutrality. On the 11th of August Mr. Disraeli made his last speech in the House of Commons. It was one distinguished by much of his old brilliancy and power, and was delivered during the debate raised by Mr. Evelyn Ashley on the Eastern Question. He explained that he had not denied the existence of the 'Bulgarian atrocities,' but that he had no official knowledge of them. In answer to Sir W. Harcourt, he affirmed that we were not responsible for what occurred in Turkey, nor were the Turks our especial *protégés*. The Premier announced that the duty of the Government at that critical moment was to maintain the Empire of England, and they would never agree to any step

that hazarded the existence of that Empire. On the morning after this speech it was publicly announced that Mr. Disraeli would immediately be elevated to the peerage under the title of Earl of Beaconsfield.

Parliament was prorogued on the 15th of August, and shortly afterwards appeared the official report of Mr. W. Baring, corroborating the reported outrages in Bulgaria. After strict investigation, Mr. Baring came to the conclusion that no fewer than 12,000 persons had perished in the sandjak of Philippopolis! But the most fearful tragedy during the whole insurrection was the one at Batak. A large number of people, probably about 1,000 or 1,200, took refuge in the church and churchyard. The church was a solid building, and resisted all attempts by the Bashi-Bazouks to burn it from the outside. They consequently fired in through the windows, and, getting upon the roof, tore off the tiles, and threw burning pieces of wood and rags dipped in petroleum among the mass of unhappy human beings inside. At last the door was forced in, the massacre completed, and the inside of the church burnt. Hardly any one escaped out of the fatal walls. The scene for some time afterwards beggared description. The massacre at Batak was the most heinous crime which has stained the history of the present century; and Mr. Baring added that for this exploit the Turkish leader, Achmet Agha, had received the Order of the Medjidie.

Mr. Gladstone deemed it high time that the voice of England should be heard upon these infamous deeds, and in September published a pamphlet entitled *Bulgarian Horrors, and the Question of the East.* He urged that England should aim at the accomplishment of three great objects, in addition to the termination of the war, viz., 1. To put a stop to the anarchical misrule, the plundering, the murdering, which still desolated Bulgaria; 2. To make effectual provision against the recurrence of the outrages recently perpetrated under the sanction of the Ottoman Government by excluding its administrative action for the future, not only from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also, and above all, from Bulgaria; 3. To redeem by such measures the honour of the British name, which in the deplorable events of the year had been more gravely compromised than he had known it to be at any former period. 'Let us insist,' he said, 'that our Government, which has been working in one direction shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbachis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned. . . . If it be allowable that the executive power of Turkey should renew at this great crisis,

by permission or authority of Europe, the charter of its existence in Bulgaria, then there is not on record, since the beginnings of political society, a protest that man has lodged against intolerable misgovernment, or a stroke he has dealt at loathsome tyranny, that ought not henceforward to be branded as a crime.'

A few days later, Mr. Gladstone followed up his pamphlet by an address to his constituents on Blackheath. This speech not only furnished a watchword for the campaign which followed, but is amongst the most eloquent and impassioned of the ex-Premier's political orations. The speaker was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and at various points in his address, the meeting was literally carried away by the strength of its emotions. Referring to the massacre at Glencoe, the atrocities of Badajoz, the revolt of Cephalonia, and the more recent revolt in Jamaica, Mr. Gladstone said, 'To compare those proceedings to what we are now dealing with, is an insult to the common-sense of Europe. They may constitute a dark page in British history, but if you could concentrate the whole of that page, or every one of them, into a single point and a single spot, it would not be worthy to appear upon one of the pages that will hereafter consign to everlasting infamy the proceedings of the Turks in Bulgaria.' With regard to the policy to be pursued, and the terms to be offered to the Turk, he would say to the latter, 'You shall receive a reasonable tribute; you shall retain your

titular sovereignty; your empire shall not be invaded; but never again while the years roll their course, so far as it is in our power to determine, never again shall the hand of violence be raised by you; never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you for the sake of making mankind miserable in Bulgaria.' Passing on to the question how this effectual prevention was to be secured, Mr. Gladstone said it could only be done with safety by the united action of the Powers of Europe. The mind and heart of Europe must be one in this matter. The assent of Russia, Germany, Austria, France, England, and Italy was not only important, but indispensable, to entire success and satisfaction. Yet there were two Powers whose position was such that they stood forth far before the rest in authority, in the means of effectually applying that authority, and in responsibility upon this great question, viz., England and Russia. Enlarging still further upon this point, Mr. Gladstone observed:—

'I am far from supposing—I am not such a dreamer as to suppose, that Russia, more than any other country, is exempt from selfishness and ambition. But she has also within her, like other countries, the pulse of humanity, and, for my own part, I believe it is the pulse of humanity which is now throbbing almost ungovernably in her people. Upon the concord and hearty co-operation—not upon a mere hollow truce between England and Russia, but upon their concord and hearty cordial co-operation—depend a good settlement of this question. Their power is immense. The power of Russia by land for acting upon these countries as against Turkey is perfectly resistless; the power of England by sea is scarcely less important at this moment. For I ask you what would be the condition of the Turkish armies if the British admiral now in Besika Bay were to inform the Government of Constantinople that from that hour, until atonement had been made—until punishment had descended, until justice

had been vindicated—not a man, nor a ship, nor a boat should cross the waters of the Bosphorus, or the cloudy Euxine, or the bright Ægean, to carry aid to the Turkish troops?'

This address drew forth a reply from Lord Beaconsfield. Speaking at Aylesbury, he admitted that the Ministerial policy was unpopular, but went on to describe the conduct of his opponents as worse than any Bulgarian atrocity: he strongly condemned the 'designing politicians who take advantage of sublime sentiments, and apply them for the furtherance of their sinister ends.' This language, though endorsed in some quarters, was warmly denounced as painful and extraordinary trifling in others.

Lord Derby directed Sir Henry Elliot, our ambassador at Constantinople, to lay the results of Mr. Baring's inquiry into the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria before the Sultan, and to demand the punishment of the offenders. This demand, however, practically went unenforced. On the 1st of November, Turkey, under pressure from Russia, agreed to an armistice of eight weeks. On the 2nd, the Emperor of Russia pledged his sacred word of honour to the English ambassador, in the most serious and solemn manner, that he had no intention of acquiring Constantinople; and that, if necessity compelled him to occupy a portion of Bulgaria, it would only be provisionally, and until the peace and safety of the Christian population were secured. He desired the ambassador to dispel the cloud of suspicion and distrust which had gathered in England against Russia. Notwithstanding these pacific assurances, on

the 9th Lord Beaconsfield delivered a warlike speech at the Ministerial banquet at the Guildhall. Apprised of the tenor of this speech, the Czar stated on the following day at Moscow that, if the Porte did not accede to his demands, Russia would be prepared to act independently.

Lord Salisbury arrived at Constantinople on the 5th of December, to attend the Conference, and on the 8th a great meeting took place at St. James's Hall, for the purpose of discussing the Eastern Question. The Duke of Westminster occupied the chair at the afternoon conference, which was addressed by representative men connected with the army, with letters, and with religion, including Mr. Anthony Trollope, Professor Bryce, Mr. Richard, Sir T. F. Buxton, Sir G. Campbell, the Rev. Dr. Allon, and Sir H. Havelock. The evening meeting, which was presided over by Lord Shaftesbury, was addressed by the ex-Premier, Canon Liddon, Lord Waveney, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Fawcett, Mr. E. A. Freeman, and others. Mr. Freeman, referring to one interpretation of the doctrine of British interests, said, 'Perish the interests of England, perish our dominion in India, sooner than we should strike one blow, or speak one word, on behalf of the wrong against the right.' Professor Fawcett said they had been enjoined to 'forgive and forget,' but they could never forget that England's present rulers had done all that they could do to associate the name of England with the most abominable cruelties that ever dis-

graced Europe, and with the most detestable Government that ever afflicted mankind. There was one Minister at least who ought never to be forgiven, and that was the present Prime Minister. The chief interest of the proceedings, however, centred in the speech which it was known that Mr. Gladstone would deliver. When the right hon. gentleman rose, he was received (as at Blackheath) with almost unbounded demonstrations of applause. After declaring that no change of the public sentiment of England had taken place on this question, and repudiating the assertion that the conveners of that meeting had any desire to embarrass the Government, he expressed what he believed to be the general feeling and knowledge of the Conference—that the power and reputation and influence of England had, for a long period of time within the past twelve months, and in regard to that enormous question, been employed for purposes and to an effect directly at variance with the convictions of the country. Lord Beaconsfield, he observed, had made several speeches, but it was not until his latest utterance at Aylesbury that he appeared conscious that England had duties to perform towards the Christian populations of Turkey. 'In that speech I recognise first of all this admission, that we had duties towards the subject populations—an acknowledgment which we were never able to obtain during the session. Not one word, not one syllable, to that effect, could we draw from the lips of the Minister. The first declaration of it, if I remember aright, was made by Sir

Stafford Northcote, in some speech in the north, in which he said, "Of course, we are all aware of our duties to the Christian populations of Turkey." I am extremely glad that they were aware of it; but I am not the less sorry that during the whole session of Parliament, and during the whole of the correspondence that filled the Blue-books, the recognition of that obligation is, so far as I know, nowhere to be found.'

After making this effective point, Mr. Gladstone turned to the Conference, and expressed a fervent hope that Lord Salisbury's instructions were not in accordance with the Guildhall speech, but that his lordship's own clear sight and generous instincts would have free scope at Constantinople. He also trusted that the Plenipotentiaries would insist on the future independence of the provinces, or at least of such a mediate autonomy as would insure them against arbitrary injustice and oppression. The speaker, in his peroration, referred to the work indicated, not merely as a worthy deed, but as an absolute duty. 'It is a case of positive obligation, and, under the stringent pressure of that obligation, I say that, if at length long-suffering and long-oppressed humanity in these provinces is lifting itself from the ground, and beginning again to contemplate the heavens, it is our business to assist the work. It is our business to acknowledge the obligation, to take part in the burden, and it is our privilege to claim for our country a share in the honour and in the fame. This

acknowledgment of duty, this attempt to realise the honour, is what we at least shall endeavour to obtain from the Government; and with nothing less than this shall we who are assembled here be, under any circumstances, persuaded to say "Content."'

Mr. Carlyle, who had been invited to join the Conference, wrote a letter in which he said, 'The only clear advice I have to give is, as I have stated, that the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country left to honest European guidance, delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men.' One excellent effect of this public agitation had been to convince the Government of the reality of the grievances of the Christian populations of Turkey, and of the necessity for stronger measures than they had at first contemplated. The Conference at St. James's Hall would have had an even deeper and wider influence, however, but for the fact that the result of the diplomatic Conference at Constantinople was being awaited with considerable anxiety, and yet at the same time strong hopefulness, by the English people.

The Constantinople Conference met on the 23rd of December, and just as a stringent scheme of reform and guarantees had been drawn up, the Plenipotentiaries were informed of the promulgation of a new Ottoman constitution. On the 30th, the Porte announced that it had a counter-proposition to make.

This was not then produced, and matters dragged their slow length along until the 20th of January, 1877, when the Conference closed. The Turkish Government had rejected the proposals of the European Powers. These proposals had been reduced to two, viz., an International Commission nominated by Europe without executive powers, and the appointment of Valis (governors-general) by the Sultan for five years, with the approval of guaranteeing Governments. Less than these demands the Powers would not accept, but they were rejected by the Ottoman Government as 'contrary to the integrity, independence, and dignity of the Empire.'

During the recess Mr. Gladstone spoke on several occasions upon the all-absorbing topic then agitating the public mind. At Hawarden he dwelt upon the condition of Turkey, and pleaded that it was the wretched Turkish system, and not the Turks themselves, whom we should judge. He hoped that a remedy might be found for the existing melancholy condition of things. When the Constantinople Conference failed, the right hon. gentleman, alluding to this 'great transaction and woeful failure,' threw the responsibility of the situation on the Government. In an address to the electors of Frome, he referred strongly to the tremendous responsibility of Ministers; and in a speech at the Taunton Railway-station, he said, with reference to the injunction to himself and his friends to mind their own business, that the Eastern Question was their own business. As to the

treaties of 1856 being in force, his opinion upon this point was given in one sentence—Turkey had entirely broken those treaties and trampled them under foot. If the treaties were in force, we were bound to Turkey by a several as well as a joint guarantee. But it was ridiculous to say that these treaties were in force as between Turkey and ourselves.

Parliament opened on the 8th of February. In the House of Lords, in reply to a powerful speech by the Duke of Argyll, the Premier said he believed that any interference directed to the alleviation of the sufferings of the Turkish Christians would only make their sufferings worse. He asked for a calm, sagacious, and statesmanlike consideration of the whole subject, never forgetting the great interests of England, if it was to have any solution at all. In the House of Commons, during the debate on the Address, Mr. Gladstone said that he was prepared to stand by every statement he had made in the autumn; and on the 16th he initiated a debate upon the Eastern Question generally, but with special reference to our treaty obligations. The right hon. gentleman demanded the entire freedom of England from any obligation to the Porte, and enlarged upon the contradictory declarations of recent negotiations, Foreign Office documents, Queen's Speech, and Ministerial orations. The country, he maintained, must be left absolutely free to act upon the dictates of policy, justice, and humanity. Mr. Gathorne Hardy said that if the Eastern knot were difficult to untie, the time

had not yet arrived for England to apply the sword to cut it. The Government, without being obliged to go to war with Turkey, were pledged to maintain the faith of treaties which they had no right to violate.

During the animated debate which ensued, Mr. Gladstone furnished another proof of his claim to be accounted, perhaps, the readiest and most effective debater of his time. Having been taken to task by Mr. Chaplin, he retorted in an impromptu speech, which, for incisiveness and effect, can never be forgotten by those who listened to it. Mr. Chaplin complained that Mr. Gladstone and a certain portion of the Liberal party had endeavoured to regulate the foreign policy of the country by pamphlets, by speeches at public meetings, and by a so-called National Conference, instead of leaving it in the hands of the Executive Government. One of two things he maintained the right hon. gentleman must do—he must either make good or withdraw his assertions; there was no other course which it was open to a man of honour to follow. The Speaker, being appealed to, ruled that the last expression exceeded the limits of Parliamentary discussion. The hon. member withdrew it, but concluded by expressing his regret that the right hon. member for Greenwich had, during the recess, done so much to impair that respect and esteem which they on all sides felt for him in that House, and to shake to its foundation the great and splendid reputation of a man whom England had long learnt to regard, and as he and all admitted him to be, among the greatest

of her sons. He moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. Chaplin speedily discovered how profound had been his mistake in bearding the lion of debate. Mr. Gladstone at once rose; and, in seconding the motion for adjournment, expressed his surprise that, for the first time in a public career extending over nearly half a century, he should be accused of a disinclination to meet his opponents in fair fight. Why had not the hon. gentleman attended those public meetings of which he complained? As far as he (Mr. Gladstone) was concerned, it was perfectly well known, to Liberals and Tories alike, that he had shrunk from meeting the public on this question. 'But such is the depth and strength of the sentiment which has taken possession of the mind and heart of England in reference to this question, that I, in my poor and feeble person, simply because I have been associated with that sentiment, have felt it almost impossible to avoid the manifestation of this almost unexampled national and popular feeling.' After a scathing rebuke of Lord George Hamilton, who had twice interrupted the course of his speech, Mr. Gladstone thus returned to Mr. Chaplin:—'He says, sir, that I have been an inflammatory agitator, and that, as soon as I have got into this House, I have no disposition to chant in the same key. But before these debates are over—before this question is settled—the hon. gentleman will know more about my opinions than he knows at present, or is likely to know to-night. I am not about to reveal now to the

hon. gentleman the secrets of a mind so inferior to his own. I am not so young as to think that his obliging inquiries supply me with the opportunities most advantageous to the public interest for the laying out of the plan of a campaign. By the time the hon. member is as old as I am, if he comes in his turn to be accused of cowardice by a man of the next generation to himself, he probably may find it convenient to refer to the reply I am now making, and to make it a model, or, at all events, to take from it hints and suggestions, with which to dispose of the antagonist that may then rise against him.' Mr. Gladstone was glad that there was a tremendous feeling abroad upon this Eastern Question. He had been told that by the pamphlet he wrote, and the speech he delivered, he had done all this mischief, and agitated Europe and the world; but if that were the case, why did not the hon. gentleman, by writing another pamphlet, and delivering another speech, put the whole thing right? If he (the speaker) had done anything, it was only in the same way that a man applies a match to an enormous mass of fuel which had been already prepared. Before his pamphlet appeared, Lord Derby had telegraphed to Sir Henry Elliot that the outrages committed by the Turkish troops had roused an universal feeling of indignation in all classes of English society. It was the nation that led the classes and the leaders in this matter, and not the classes and leaders who led the nation. 'I will tell the hon. gentleman,' continued Mr. Gladstone, 'something in answer to his

questions, and it is that I will tell him nothing at all. I will take my own counsel, and beg to inform him that he shall have no reason whatever to complain, when the accounts come to be settled and cast up at the end of the whole matter, of any reticence or suppressions on my part.' As to what he (the speaker) had told the people of Taunton, it was briefly this—that it was absolutely necessary to watch the policy of the Government; that in the acts, in the language, and in the tendency of Lord Salisbury he had great confidence; but that he did not know whether the Government had one policy or two policies. Mr. Gladstone concluded his spirited retort with this appeal upon the general question:—

'We have, I think, the most solemn and the greatest question to determine that has come before Parliament in my time. It is only under very rare circumstances that such a question—the question of the East—can be fully raised, fully developed and exhibited, and fully brought home to the minds of men with that force, with that command, with that absorbing power which it ought to exercise over them. In the original entrance of the Turks into Europe, it may be said to have been a turning point in human history. To a great extent it continues to be the cardinal question, the question which casts into the shade every other question, and the question which is now brought before the mind of the country far more fully than at any period of our history, far more fully than even at the time of the Crimean war, when we were pouring forth our blood and treasure in what we thought to be the cause of justice and right. And I endeavoured to impress upon the minds of my audience at Taunton, not a blind prejudice against this man or that, but a great watchfulness, and the duty of great activity. It is the duty of every man to feel that he is bound for himself, according to his opportunities, to examine what belongs to this question, with regard to which it can never be forgotten that we are those who set up the power of Turkey in 1854; that we are those who gave her the strength which has been exhibited in the Bulgarian massacres; that we are those who made the treaty arrangements that have secured her for twenty years from almost a single hour of uneasi-

ness brought about by foreign intervention; and that, therefore, nothing can be greater and nothing deeper than our responsibility in the matter. It is incumbent upon us, one and all, that we do not allow any consideration, either of party or personal convenience, to prevent us from endeavouring to the best of our ability to discharge this great duty, that now, at length, in the East, has sprung up; and that in the midst of this great opportunity, when all Europe has been called to collective action, and when something like European concert has been established—when we learn the deep human interests that are involved in every stage of the question—as far as England at least is concerned, every Englishman should strive to the utmost of his might that justice shall be done.'

These eloquent words were followed by protracted cheering—cheering at which the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself said he could not feel surprised. Another debate on the Eastern Question took place before the recess, on a motion, by Mr. Fawcett, affirming the necessity of obtaining adequate securities for the better government of Turkey. Sir H. Drummond Wolff read extracts from speeches by Mr. Gladstone on the Crimean war and the Cretan Insurrection, to show that whereas he now refused the Turks even a twelvemonth's respite, and acknowledged none but humanitarian motives, he then contemplated Turkish reform must be the work of a generation, and that the duty of neutrality was superior to that of humanity. Upon this Mr. Gladstone showed that his assailant had used garbled extracts from old speeches, which were susceptible of a different interpretation being put upon them. In a correspondence with Sir Henry Elliot, Mr. Gladstone also vindicated himself from an erroneous interpretation that had been put on his 'bag and baggage' declaration, which, he explained, did not

mean turning the Turks out of Europe, but that all the civil, military, and police authorities should leave the country.

A Protocol was signed at the English Foreign Office, on the 31st of March, stating that the Powers proposed to watch carefully, by means of their representatives at Constantinople, and their local agents, the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government were carried into effect. If their hopes should once more be disappointed, and if the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan should not be improved in a manner to prevent the return of the complications which periodically disturbed the peace of the East, they thought it right to declare that such a state of affairs would be incompatible with their interests, and those of Europe in general. The Turkish Government replied that it was not aware how it could have deserved so ill of justice and civilisation as to see itself placed in a humiliating position without example in the world. On the 24th of April war was declared by Russia, the Czar's manifesto giving as the reasons for this step the refusal of guarantees by the Porte for the proposed reforms, the failure of the Conference, and the rejection of the Protocol. England, France, and Italy issued proclamations, on the 1st of May, enjoining strict neutrality in the war then pending between Turkey and Russia.

On the 7th, a great debate was opened in the House of Commons by Mr. Gladstone. Disappointed

with the course of the negotiations, and incensed at the attitude of Turkey, he had given notice that he should move the following resolutions:—

'First: That this House finds just cause of dissatisfaction and complaint in the conduct of the Ottoman Porte with regard to the despatch written by the Earl of Derby on September 21, 1876, and relating to the massacres in Bulgaria. Second: That until such conduct shall have been essentially changed, and guarantees on behalf of the subject populations other than the promises or ostensible measures of the Porte shall have been provided, that Government will be deemed by this House to have lost all claim to receive either the material or the moral support of the British Crown. Third: That in the midst of the complications which exist, and the war which has actually begun, this House earnestly desires the influence of the British Crown in the Councils of Europe to be employed with a view to the early and effectual development of local liberty and practical self-government in the disturbed provinces of Turkey, by putting an end to the oppression which they now suffer, without the imposition upon them of any other foreign dominion. Fourth: That bearing in mind the wise and honourable policy of this country in the Protocol of April, 1826, and the Treaty of July, 1827, with respect to Greece, this House furthermore earnestly desires that the influence of the British Crown may be addressed to the promoting the concert of the European Powers in exacting from the Ottoman Porte, by their united authority, such changes in the Government of Turkey as they may deem to be necessary for the purposes of humanity and justice, for effectual defence against intrigue, and for the peace of the world. Fifth: That a humble Address, setting forth the prayer of this House, according to the tenor of the foregoing resolutions, be prepared and presented to her Majesty.'

These Resolutions were, of course, on the face of them, hostile to the Government, and it was found that many members of the Liberal party declined to give them their support on the ground that they pledged England to a joint policy of force with Russia. When the time came for moving them, therefore, Mr. Gladstone announced that he accepted a verbal amendment of the second resolution, which in

its amended form simply declared that Turkey had forfeited all claim to support, moral and material. The last three resolutions would not be proceeded with. Sir John Lubbock, who had given notice to move the 'previous question,' now said he should not do so, but would cordially support the amended resolutions. A long preliminary discussion ensued upon the altered condition of affairs, but ultimately the standing orders were postponed, and Mr. Gladstone rose to propose his resolutions in their altered form.

He began by alluding to the enormous number of manifestations of the opinion of the country, reports of nearly one hundred meetings having reached him that morning. With regard to the resolutions passed at these meetings, in more than nineteen cases out of twenty their general scope had been in correspondence not merely with the first two of his resolutions, but with the whole. Coming then to the general question, Mr. Gladstone, with clear and tempered eloquence, discussed the resolutions in their entirety, affirming their justice. He exposed the different views prevailing in the Cabinet, though the Government had never disclaimed their ill-omened phrase of promised 'moral support' to Turkey. The conduct of the Government for eighteen months back had been more deplorable than the conduct of any Government since the Peace of Vienna, and its position had been most ambiguous. The public mind had been prepared for war, and Lord Derby's answer to the Gortschakoff Circular was redolent with the old odious doctrine of

'moral support.' With regard to our expostulations and remonstrances, the Porte, which well understood the force of words, knew that our expostulations began in words and that they ended in words; and it was time that the people of England and the people of Turkish Christian provinces should begin to understand as much. If we went no further than this, the work must pass into the hands of others. Reviewing the history of the atrocities, Lord Derby's despatch, and the existing deplorable condition of the provinces, he insisted that the guilt must be fixed, not on the minor instruments, but on the Turkish Government, which had caused and encouraged the massacres. The Christian subjects of the Porte had been led by the conduct of the British Government to look upon Russia as their best friend, and we had forced upon the Czar the task of redeeming them from oppression. Mr. Gladstone next showed how firmly and vigorously a Liberal Government had acted in the case of the Syrian massacres; and giving what he believed to be the true interpretation of the treaty of Kainardji, he contended that the Crimean war deprived the Christians of a safeguard which we were bound to make good to them. He steadfastly adhered to the whole of his resolutions, but, though he could not understand why they should not in their entirety receive the support of Lord Hartington, he had come to the conclusion that it would not be expedient or becoming in him to ask the Speaker to go through the idle form of putting each of them in succession from the chair.

Mr. Gladstone asked, in conclusion, whether, with regard to the great battle of freedom against oppression then going on, we in England could lay our hands upon our hearts, and in the face of God and man say, 'We have well and sufficiently performed our part'? Then came this noble peroration:—

'Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a noble blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned—to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition and policy in regard to Turkey. I appeal to an established tradition older, wider, nobler far—a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of these interests in obeying the dictates of honour and justice. And, sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to dress up the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy in the garb of British interests, and then, with a new and base idolatry, fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago—viz., that it is the populations of those countries that will ultimately possess them—that will ultimately determine their abiding condition? It is to this fact, this law, that we should look. There is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those unhappy people are still as yet making an effort to retrieve what they have lost so long, but have not ceased to love and to desire. I speak of those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion—a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen—stand on the rocks of Montenegro, and are ready now, as they have ever been during the 400 years of their exile from their fertile plains, to sweep down from their fastnesses and meet the Turks at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the 5,000,000 of Bulgarians, cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you; they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not seek alliance with Russia, or with any foreign Power, but that they seek to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame

—the greatest that exists on God's earth—is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove; but to removing which, for the present, you seem to have no efficacious means of offering even the smallest practical contribution. But, sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it if they were free to act on their own beliefs and aspirations. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you mean to claim for yourselves even a single leaf in that immortal chaplet of renown, which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and upon your own duty, I believe, for one, that the knell of Turkish tyranny in these provinces has sounded. So far as human eye can judge, it is about to be destroyed. The destruction may not come in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come this boon from what hands it may, it will be a noble boon, and as a noble boon will gladly be accepted by Christendom and the world.'

The debate was continued for five days. In the course of it, Mr. Cross stated that now that war had broken out, absolute neutrality was the rule of the Government, and neither side would have either moral or material support from England. Conscious of their strength, the Government would watch the course of events, and, if an opportunity offered for interposing their good offices, they would not allow it to pass. These Ministerial assurances appeared to satisfy a large party in the House and the country. The speakers for and against the resolutions included most of the able men of both parties. Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chamberlain, and other advanced Liberal members, spoke strongly against the Government, and Mr. Walter strongly regretted that they had not used the power of coercion earlier, affirming that public opinion would have enforced it if only

the Bulgarian massacres had preceded the Berlin Memorandum. Mr. Roebuck (type of Liberals so-called) rendered a service to the Government which was gratefully accepted, and delivered a speech against the resolutions. The one sentence in this address, perhaps, which is now best worth preserving is that in which he described Mr. Gladstone as 'a man whom the country has believed to be one of its greatest and most deserving and most patriotic Ministers at one time or another—a man endowed with great ability, with vast power, with a winning manner, and whose influence in this House has been almost illimitable.' Men like Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Roebuck failed to perceive that in this Eastern Question (as in many others in the past) it was his high moral courage and loftiness of purpose which had given Mr. Gladstone this 'almost illimitable' influence, and that were now urging him forward in 'the cause of oppressed humanity.'

The Chancellor of the Exchequer insisted that all idea of concerted action was now out of the question; but Lord Hartington maintained that the resolutions pointed to the only true policy that ought to guide the action of the Government. In summing up the debate, Mr. Gladstone passed in review many of the speeches delivered, and pointed out that Mr. Cross's assurances (of which he approved) were in direct contradiction to Lord Derby's despatch. He did not believe that the time for an authoritative interference by combined Europe had gone by. Such an inter-

ference was the only satisfactory settlement that could be arrived at. He denied emphatically that coercion meant war. The shortest way to put an end to the conflict and stop bloodshed would be by drawing a naval cordon round Turkey, and neutralising the Turkish fleet. In concluding, the right hon. gentleman said:—

'We are engaged in a continuous effort; we roll the stone of Sisyphus against the slope, and the moment the hand shall be withdrawn, down it will begin to run. However, the time is short; the sands of the hour-glass are running out. The longer you delay the less in all likelihood you will be able to save from the wreck of the integrity and independence of the Turkish Empire. If Russia should fail, her failure would be a disaster to mankind; and the condition of the suffering races, for whom we are supposed to have laboured, will be worse than it was before. If she succeeds, and if her conduct be honourable, nay, even if it be but tolerably prudent, the performance of the work she has in hand will, notwithstanding all your jealousies and all your reproaches, secure for her an undying fame. When that work shall be accomplished, though it be not in the way and by the means I would have chosen, as an Englishman I shall hide my head, but as a man I shall rejoice. Nevertheless, to my latest day I will exclaim—Would God that in this crisis the voice of the nation had been suffered to prevail; would God that in this great, this holy deed, England had not been refused her share!'

For Mr. Gladstone's first resolution there appeared 223; against, 354. Six Liberals voted with the Government, and only one Conservative (Mr. Newdegate) against them. Sixteen Conservatives were absent, and twenty Liberals; while nineteen Home Rulers voted with the Government, and eleven with Mr. Gladstone. It was matter of complaint that English statesmanship at this time was not at a very high level, but the country generally was for the

moment content with a policy of watchfulness and strict neutrality.

Before the session closed Mr. Gladstone addressed a large meeting at Bingley Hall, Birmingham, on the Eastern Question and the present condition of the Liberal party, and in the autumn he paid a visit to Ireland. On his return to Holyhead, in obedience to the demand of those who had gathered to receive him, he referred to the great question yet uppermost in the minds of the people. He still expressed his belief that Turkey would have yielded to the concerted action of Europe, and noticed the change in the tone of the Government, which was shown by the careful omission in the Premier's speech of the old phrase, 'the independence of Turkey.' Again he protested strongly against the country being dragged into war, and warmly eulogised the Nonconformists for the consistency and unanimity with which they had insisted on justice to the Eastern Christians. Political feeling at this time entered into everything; but Scotland remained true to Mr. Gladstone. It was not without significance, perhaps, that in November he was elected Lord Rector of Glasgow University by a large majority in all the nations, his opponent being the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Beaconsfield was the retiring Lord Rector, and the Conservatives nominated Sir Stafford Northcote as his successor. The polling gave the following result—For Mr. Gladstone, 1,153; for Sir S. Northcote, 609.

We shall not follow the course of the Russo-

Turkish war, which is matter of familiar history. The splendid bravery of Osman Pasha and other Turkish generals could not avert the fortunes of war, which, speaking generally, may be said in this instance to have resulted righteously. The Russians were doubtless guilty of atrocities, most of which were, perhaps, inseparable from Oriental warfare, yet none the less to be deplored; but nothing can for one moment be alleged against them to compare with the deliberate and continuous system of massacre and outrage pursued by the Turks when as yet there was not even the poor excuse of open war to plead in their behalf. And there would probably have been fewer even of these Russian outrages had it not been for the sentiments of indignation and retaliation which it is difficult at such times, and under the influence of vindictive feelings, altogether to repress. Turkey suffered irremediable defeats by the fall of Kars and Plevna, and the Russian capture of the Schipka Pass. On the 23rd of January, the Turkish Plenipotentiaries at Adrianople received instructions from the Porte to accept the bases of peace as submitted to them in writing by the Grand Duke Nicholas.

At a meeting of Oxford undergraduates, held on the 30th of January, 1878, to celebrate the formation of a Liberal Palmerston Club, Mr. Gladstone strongly condemned the sending of the British Fleet into the Dardanelles. He was afraid it would be found that it was a breach of European law. He had been accused of being an agitator, and with regard to the last

eighteen months that was true. To his own great pain, and with infinite reluctance, but under the full and strong conviction, he might say of political old age, for the last eighteen months he might be said to have played the part of an agitator. His purpose had been to the best of his power, day and night, week by week, month by month, to counterwork what he believed to be the purposes of Lord Beaconsfield. The proposed vote of credit, Mr. Gladstone said, was the most indefensible proposition that in his time had ever been submitted to Parliament. Lord Beaconsfield, replying to this and other speeches of his rival, at a banquet held at the Riding School at Knightsbridge, described him as 'a sophistical rhetorician, inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and to glorify himself.' This description of Mr. Gladstone's eloquence bears no inconsiderable resemblance to a passage in Lord Macaulay's *Edinburgh Review* article, but the language of the former lacks the clearness and simplicity which distinguish that of the great Whig historian.*

* In this Knightsbridge speech, also, Lord Beaconsfield strongly attacked Mr. Gladstone for his alleged personalities. Being courteously requested by his rival to furnish references to these personalities, his lordship excused himself for searching over the speeches of two years and a half, but admitted that the word 'devilish' had not been used by Mr. Gladstone, either in the Oxford speech or elsewhere. This was the only reparation Mr. Gladstone could obtain.

The Government having asked for a vote of credit, a long discussion ensued in the House of Commons early in February. Mr. Gladstone, while willing to allow bygones to be bygones, said that the vote could not possibly give the Government the strength of an undivided nation. He regretted having to play such a prominent extra-Parliamentary part, and, though he had never impugned anybody's motives, not a single speech had been made in which the worst motives were not attributed to himself. The vote would not strengthen the hands of the Government, nor was it needed for any endangered British interests, and with ordinary military estimates of £26,000,000, we were surely already on a footing of equality with other Powers. The vote was, moreover, a complete violation of the constitutional rule that no burden should be placed on the people without its necessity being proved. Besides, to usher in a Conference with the clash of arms would destroy its peaceful character. He next specified the points upon which the Government should insist at the Conference, and in which they would have the support of the Opposition. Interference with the freedom of the Danube, by a cession of Roumanian territory, should be resisted; the claims of the subject races to freedom and good government should be supported; but there was no reason why Bulgaria should not be content to pay a tribute, seeing that she had relied on the efforts of others for her liberty. Great Britain ought to act as the champion of the Hellenic provinces, and

the Government should be content to join with the other Powers in regard to the Straits. In order to secure unity and concord, and to unite a now divided nation, Mr. Gladstone suggested that the Government should postpone the proposed vote for a time, with liberty to renew it if the Government thought fit; and he added that an address should be presented to her Majesty from both Houses, expressing their readiness to support the Government in bringing about a permanent peace at the Conference, recognising the promise which the Government had given to obtain good terms for Turkey, but expressing a hope that the influence of the country would be used to obtain liberty and good government for the Christian subjects of the Porte.

Before the debate closed, a serious panic occurred on the Stock Exchange, in consequence of a report that the Russians were advancing on Constantinople. On the 7th, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer read a telegram from Prince Gortschakoff, declaring that there was not a word of truth in the telegrams, but that orders had been given to the Russian troops in Europe and in Asia to stop all hostilities. Next day it was announced that a portion of the British Mediterranean fleet had been despatched to Constantinople. The vote of credit was ultimately carried by 328 against 124. The Marquis of Hartington and other prominent Liberals refrained from voting. On the 3rd of March a treaty of peace between Russia and Turkey was signed at San Stefano. The treaty

consisted of twenty-nine articles, of which the following were the chief:—Turkey agreed to pay a large war indemnity; Servia and Montenegro were to acquire their independence, and to receive accessions of territory; Bulgaria was to be formed into a new Principality with greatly extended boundaries, and to be governed by a prince elected by the inhabitants; the navigation of the Straits was declared free for merchant vessels both in time of peace and war; fifty thousand Russian troops would occupy Bulgaria for about two years, until the formation of a Bulgarian militia, whose strength would be fixed by Russia and Turkey; Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, and Bayazid, with the territories comprised, were to be ceded to Russia; a treaty was to be concluded between Turkey and Roumania, and the latter was to demand her indemnity from the Porte; and finally, Russia, not wishing to annex territory, was to receive the Dobrudscha, in order to cede it to Roumania in exchange for the Roumanian portion of Bessarabia.

These terms were regarded as oppressive by her Majesty's Government, who demanded that the whole treaty should be submitted to the proposed Congress at Berlin.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOREIGN POLICY—1873-79.

Calling out of the Reserve Forces—Circular to Foreign Courts—Results of the Berlin Congress—Reception of the English Plenipotentiaries in London—'Peace with Honour'—Despatch of Indian Troops to Malta—The Act condemned by Mr. Gladstone as unconstitutional—Dangers of Government Policy—Mr. Gladstone at Bermondsey—The Anglo-Turkish Treaty an 'insane Covenant'—Debate on Eastern Affairs in the House of Commons—Speech of the ex-Premier—Work of the Berlin Congress reviewed—English Hostility to Greece—Our Responsibilities in Asiatic Turkey—Lord Beaconsfield's Imperial Policy—Mr. Gladstone at Rhyl—Lord Beaconsfield at the Lord Mayor's Banquet—A 'scientific Frontier' in India—The Frontier criticised by Mr. Gladstone—The Representation of Greenwich—Farewell Visit of the ex-Premier—Important Speech at Plumstead—'Personal Government'—The Afghan War—Its Origin—Responsibility for the War—It is debated in the House of Commons—The War eloquently condemned by Mr. Gladstone—Proposed Vote of Censure on the Government defeated—Debate on the Greek Question—Mr. Gladstone advances the Claims of Greece—Speeches on Prerogative—On the Zulu War—The Speaker and the Privileges of Parliament—Corporal Punishment in the Army—Mr. Gladstone attacks the Financial Policy of the Government—The Gladstone and Beaconsfield Administrations compared.

TOWARDS the close of March, 1878, the chances of the meeting of the Berlin Congress seemed to be very shadowy, and the public uneasiness in England was intensified by the step which the Government took of calling out the reserve forces of the country. In consequence of this decision of the Cabinet, Lord Derby resigned his position as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Explaining his reasons at length in the House of Lords, his lordship said that although the

conclusions at which the Cabinet had arrived were of a grave and important nature, they did not, in his opinion, necessarily and inevitably lead to a state of war. Three days afterwards, the Marquis of Salisbury, the new Foreign Minister, issued a circular to Foreign Courts, in which he said, 'Neither the interests which her Majesty's Government are specially bound to guard, nor the well-being of the regions with which the Treaty deals, would be consulted by the assembling of a congress whose deliberations were to be restricted by such reservations as those which have been laid down by Prince Gortschakoff in his most recent communication.' A long diplomatic correspondence ensued, but at length the Congress met at Berlin on the 30th of June, the English Plenipotentiaries being the Earl of Beaconsfield and the Marquis of Salisbury. One month later, the Treaty of Berlin was signed, and the Congress closed. Some modifications were effected on the original Treaty of San Stefano. The Balkan mountains formed the southern frontier of Bulgaria, and to Austria was entrusted the task of occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina in the interests of Europe. Full liberty was left to Austria in regard to the organisation of the provinces. Montenegro received the seaport of Antivari, and a considerable increase of territory. Servia's frontier was also extended; and the Porte was requested to negotiate a rectification of the Greek frontier. Russia was to receive that portion of Bessarabia detached by the Treaty of 1856, and to cede in return the Dobrudscha to Roumania, including

Silistria and Magnolia. Batoum, Kars, and Ardahan were ceded to Russia; and a war indemnity of £47,500,000 was to be charged after guaranteed loans and anterior hypothecations.

For their share in negotiating this treaty, the English representatives received a popular ovation on arriving in England, and rewards from the Sovereign followed. Addressing the crowd from a window of the Foreign Office, on his arrival in London, Lord Beaconsfield said, 'Lord Salisbury and myself have brought you back peace, but a peace, I hope, with honour, which may satisfy our Sovereign and tend to the welfare of the country.' It has been pointed out, however, that at this very time the envoy of Russia (whose policy we believed ourselves to be circumventing) was entering the Afghan capital; so that, although there was peace on the Bosphorus, as a direct result of our Eastern policy war broke out in Afghanistan. The phrase 'peace with honour' became the watchword of the Conservatives, but it became also the occasion of much ridicule subsequently, in consequence of the disturbed state of Europe, and the difficulties which arose in the fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty. Certainly, if any Power had reason to congratulate itself upon the result of the Berlin Congress it was Russia, who had substantially obtained her demands. The Greeks, whom we ought to have supported, were practically left in the hands of Turkey, with what result is well known.

Though Mr. Gladstone had retired from the leader-

ship of the Liberal party, the Government found in him a sleepless critic of every development of its Eastern policy. During the debate on the calling out of the Reserves, he recapitulated arguments which he had used out of doors against the retrocession of Roumanian Bessarabia, and against other points of the treaty. But he saw no ground for war, nor any reasons for declining to attend the Congress.

The very day after Parliament had adjourned for the Easter recess, it was announced that the Ministry had ordered the Indian Government to despatch some 7,000 native troops to Malta. This important proceeding gave rise to every kind of controversy, political, legal, and constitutional. In deciding upon this step, Lord Beaconsfield had undoubtedly strained the Statute, which required that a vote of Parliament should provide for the outlay in the employment of these troops. His lordship, however, depended upon the action of the majority to endorse his policy; and this docility the majority continued to show under other circumstances, and upon other questions. The employment of the Indian troops was warmly debated in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone, in an animated speech, declared that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been guilty of an unconstitutional act in concealing in his budget a heavy item of expense which he knew was to be incurred. Government also ought to have consulted the House upon the expenditure before incurring it; they had violated the Bill of Rights and the Indian Government Act. The right

hon. gentleman thus exposed the dangers of the Government policy:—

'The Crown obtains from Parliament the right to raise 135,000 and odd men, and is strictly limited as to the use of those men. But within two or three hours, by telegram, she has in another quarter of the world 200,000 or 300,000 men, which, if the Government like, may be doubled, with no control from voting the number, and no control from voting the money, and no control from a Mutiny Act to expire next April. This vast force, having none of these restraints, and unlimited in respect of number and backed by a treasury filled with more than fifty millions a year, is at the will of those gentlemen on the benches opposite, without their saying why or wherefore. Is that to be the state of things under which we live? I do not listen for a moment to the plea that there is no practical danger. Will we consent to part with the securities that the Constitution gives us? The question is not whether we will rush right into the midst of danger, but whether we will tread within an inch of it. Do we think that liberty is a thing so safe at all times and under all circumstances that the sentinels of the Constitution may occasionally go to sleep? Is that the view entertained by the House of Commons? It may be that this division will prove that we have less liberty now than we had in 1865, or even in 1775. . . . . I think it is our duty, from generation to generation, not to abandon or suffer to be impaired the ancient and ancestral liberties of the country, and to regard with the utmost jealousy every security which has been thought wise by the great sages of the community in past times for the purpose of guaranteeing the maintenance of the Constitution. The majority in favour of these proceedings will be an historical fact of cardinal importance, and it is our duty to run the risk of a vote. It will be a great evil and a national calamity, but there is one evil greater—one calamity deeper still, and that is that the day should come when at any rate the minority of the House of Commons should shrink from its duty and fail to use every effort in its power to bring to the knowledge of the people the mode in which, and the circumstances under which, its liberties are being dealt with by its representatives.'

The men who complained that Mr. Gladstone strained the Constitution by the Purchase Warrant, supported in overwhelming numbers this far clearer violation of the Statute. There voted for the Govern-

ment, 347; against, 226. The Ministerial majority (which had been puzzled by the publication in the *Globe* of the famous Anglo-Russian Agreement, and by the course of diplomacy generally) would not allow its faith in the Beaconsfield Administration to be shaken by anything—not even by this latest exhibition of a high-handed policy, in ordering the Indian troops to Malta. For a member to differ from this policy was almost to incur the imputation of caring nothing for the honour of his country. The Marquis of Salisbury compared his relative and predecessor, the Earl of Derby, to Titus Oates; and Mr. Hanbury gravely brought a charge of treason against Mr. Gladstone for an article in the *Nineteenth Century*. The right hon. gentleman said he was 'not greatly concerned' in the matter; and the Conservative party itself thought Mr. Hanbury was going a little too far in his abortive motion.

On the 20th of July Mr. Gladstone addressed a meeting of Liberals in the Drill Hall, Bermondsey. In the outset he pointed out the importance of working on such a plan of organisation as that upon which the Southwark Liberals had based their action, and showed that the Liberal party had failed to pay such attention to this subject as it deserved. Too many amongst them were actuated by mere sectional views. There never had been a time when the differences between the various sections were more broadly pronounced, or more plainly declared. While they had the opportunity, and before the Dis-

solution, which could not be very long postponed, they ought to take measures for obtaining what they thought they did not now possess, viz., a fair representation in Parliament of the party to which they belonged. Glancing back over the legislation of the past five sessions, he contended that the Liberals were now fully justified in judging the Government by its acts; and the time had come when it would be well for the people to have the opportunity of expressing an opinion upon them. Coming to the Anglo-Turkish Treaty, Mr. Gladstone pointed out the serious obligations which devolved upon England under it, and added, 'There is but one epithet which, I think, fully describes a covenant of this kind. I think it is an insane covenant. I have known well the most eminent statesmen of the last forty years. I have known them on both sides of politics. I was in my early life a follower of Sir Robert Peel and of the Duke of Wellington, and of Lord Aberdeen; and although I regret some things that I did, and have altered some opinions that I then held, yet, in point of honour and public duty, I am not in the least ashamed of any act of my public life. I do not think that the country ever had more honourable public servants; and, moreover, I will venture to say, particularly of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, that I have known under the name of Liberals men much less Liberal than they. But, gentlemen, what I wish to say is this, that having known them on the other side—and having known well and worked with

such men as Lord Russell, Lord Palmerston, Lord Lansdowne, and many more now called to their account—I do not believe that there is one of those—I am perfectly confident that there never was one of those—men who, under any circumstances, would have been induced to put his hand to such an arrangement as that which to our shame, as I think now, has gone forth under the name of the Anglo-Turkish Convention.' Stronger language, however, followed, as Mr. Gladstone described the course of the English Government upon the subject of the treaty:—

'It is perfectly well known that if Russia is to attack India, which I for one believe to be a perfectly chimerical idea, she must attack India through the heart of Asia, and that is not through Asia Minor—it is on the other side of the Caspian, on the other side of Persia, far away from Asia Minor, and our defending Turkey in Asia Minor against Russia has no imaginable connection with driving Russia off the road to India, so that the absurdity of the arrangement is gross; but it has other qualities worse than its absurdity—its duplicity. I say that it has been a work of duplicity, and what I tell you here I hope to restate next week—that this is an act of duplicity of which every Englishman should be ashamed. Why, what have we been doing? Why has the country been kept in hot water since the Treaty of San Stefano was signed? Because we insisted that no part of that treaty could be established without the consent of Europe unless it affected the interior of the Turkish Empire, and we must have it brought before Europe. It was brought before Europe, accordingly, without reserve, and at that very time we ourselves, without the consent of Europe, were framing a secret engagement with Turkey—which interfered at every point with the Treaty of San Stefano—an act of duplicity which, I am sure, has never been surpassed, and, I believe, has rarely been equalled in the history of nations.'

Mr. Gladstone said he had heard the remark that the Turkish Convention was concluded because it was necessary to do something. Possibly it was necessary

to do something for the credit of the Government, and it remained for the people to decide whether the credit of the Government ought to be sustained at such a price. He rejoiced to think that these most unwise, extravagant, unwarrantable, unconstitutional, and dangerous proceedings had not been the work of the Liberal party; but he grieved to think that any party should have been found in England to perform such transactions.

Shortly before the close of the session a great debate arose in the House of Commons, extending over the whole range of Eastern affairs, the Treaty of Berlin, the Anglo-Turkish Convention, the acquisition of Cyprus, the claims of Greece, &c. The Marquis of Hartington opened this debate by proposing the following resolution:—'That, whilst this House has learned with satisfaction that the troubles which have arisen in the East of Europe have been terminated by the Treaty of Berlin, without a further recourse to arms, and rejoices in the extension of the liberty and self-government of some of the populations of European Turkey, this House regrets that it has not been found practicable to deal in a satisfactory manner with the claims of the kingdom of Greece, and of the Greek subjects of the Porte; that by the assumption, under the Anglo-Turkish Convention, of a sole guarantee of the integrity of the remaining territories of Turkey in Asia, the military liabilities of this country have been unnecessarily extended; that the undefined engagements entered into by her Majesty's

Government in respect of the better administration of these provinces have imposed heavy responsibilities upon the State, whilst no sufficient means have been indicated for securing their fulfilment; and that such engagements have been entered into and responsibilities incurred without the previous knowledge of Parliament.'

Mr. Gladstone's speech on this occasion, delivered on the second night of the debate, has been described as 'a long and eloquent address, unsurpassable for its comprehensive grasp of the subject, its lucidity, point, and the high tone which animated it throughout.' After some reference to the observations of the preceding speaker, Lord Sandon, Mr. Gladstone referred to the Premier's attack upon him at Knightsbridge, observing that he reflected with considerable pleasure and comfort upon the fact that it gave a much better account of him than was given in a speech delivered by the same noble earl at Aylesbury about two years ago. He (the speaker) admitted that he had strongly denounced the Ministry, but he denied that the fact that he had declared the policy of the Government to be a dishonouring policy for the country constituted a personal provocation, or could be rightly regarded as a personal attack. If criticism of this kind was forbidden, they might as well shut the doors of the House. 'The liberty of speech which we enjoy, and the publicity which attends our political life and action are, I believe, the matters in which we have the greatest amount of advantage over some other coun-

tries of the civilised world. That liberty of speech is the liberty which secures all other liberties, and the abridgment of which would render all other liberties vain and useless possessions.'

Passing now to graver matters, Mr. Gladstone said that he had been unable to discern for many months past any danger to the existence of the peace which was re-established at San Stefano, excepting in the opinions and the warlike preparations of her Majesty's Government. Sketching in general outline the work accomplished by the Congress at Berlin, the right hon. gentleman said that before the late war there were not less than 17,000,000 of people, who were subjects of the Ottoman Empire, in absolute or qualified subordination; and out of these not less than 11,500,000 had undergone a total change in their relations. After this it was a little difficult to lay down the doctrine that there had been no partition of Turkish territory. 'We have, indeed, been told that the rule of the Sultan in Europe has been concentrated exactly in the same sense in which a man's body is concentrated when his limbs have been amputated. It is reduced, curtailed; it is hemmed in on every side by absolute or qualified freedom. If that be concentration, it is concentrated; but not otherwise.' Taking the whole of the provisions of the Berlin Treaty together, he thankfully and joyfully acknowledged that great results had been achieved in the diminution of human misery, and towards the establishment of human happiness and prosperity in the East. Yet he could not shut his

eyes to the fact that the Sclavs, looking to Russia, had been freed; while the Greeks, looking to England, remained with all their aspirations unsatisfied. Russia had obtained the sanction of Europe to her territorial conquests, and established, free from all European interference, her title to a large war indemnity. Discussing the conduct of the British Plenipotentiaries at the Congress, he found that, as a general rule, they took the side opposed to that of freedom:—

'I say, sir, that in this Congress of the Great Powers, the voice of England has not been heard in unison with the institutions, the history, and the character of England. On every question that arose, and that became a subject of serious contest in the Congress, or that could lead to any important practical result, a voice had been heard from Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury which sounded in the tones of Metternich, and not in the tones of Mr. Canning, or of Lord Palmerston, or of Lord Russell. I do not mean that the British Government ought to have gone to the Congress determined to insist upon the unqualified prevalence of what I may call British ideas. They were bound to act in consonance with the general views of Europe. But within the limits of fair differences of opinion, which will always be found to arise on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty; and I do also affirm that, as a matter of fact, they took the side of servitude.'

Mr. Gladstone complained that there had been a persistent hostility, limited only by the more favourable desires of others, on the part of England to the pretensions of Greece. With regard to the agreement made between Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, he should be glad to know in what manner the Government reconciled the conclusion of that agreement with the distinct professions upon which they had been standing for three or four months before in the face of Europe, or with that perfect good faith which

ought to prevail in all the transactions of the Powers. Coming to the Anglo-Turkish Convention, the right hon. gentleman said it appeared to him that the acquisition of Cyprus was the Alpha and the Omega of that convention. With regard to the English responsibilities in Asiatic Turkey devolving upon us through the convention, he asked what were the reasons for this unheard-of, this mad undertaking. Not one of the leading English statesmen of the last forty years, from the Duke of Wellington downwards, would for one moment have consented to look at such a scheme as had been contrived and accomplished in the dark by the present Government. The cession of Cyprus violated both the letter and the spirit of the Treaty of Paris; and if Turkey was entitled to give Cyprus to England by secret treaty, was she forbidden to give over Mitylene to Russia by another and equally secret agreement? We had altered the Treaty of 1856, behind the back of Europe, by establishing a sole protectorate, and a single-handed right of intervention in Asiatic Turkey, and by assuming the administration and occupation of the island of Cyprus. The Powers of Europe had reason to complain of our conduct. Dealing next with the treaty-making power of this country, as bearing upon the dignity and the rights of Parliament, Mr. Gladstone said it had been endured because it had been uniformly used with moderation, with careful regard to precedent, with a just estimate of the rights of the people, and with due knowledge of the existing sense

and convictions of the people. But when it ceased to be so used, it was a power that became intolerable. These most recent proceedings of the Administration, if persevered in, would undoubtedly end in raising controversies with respect to that power which all should be desirous to avoid. Mr. Gladstone thus concluded his speech:—

'We are perplexed with the apprehension that as long as these proceedings continue to be sustained by a majority in this House, and as long as the country has had no opportunity of passing its final and conclusive judgment, they will be repeated and renewed, from time to time, as may seem good to the Ministers in power. More and more damage will thus be done both to the great name and honour of this country, and to the prerogatives and rights of Parliament, bound up, as they are, with the liberties of the people. First, we have the setting up of British interests, not real but imaginary. Then, we have the prosecution of these supposed British interests, by means of strange and unheard-of schemes, such as never occurred even to the imagination of statesmen of other days. Then we have those strange and unheard-of schemes, prosecuted in a manner which appears, as I conceive, to indicate a very deficient regard to the authority of the law of Europe, and to that just respect which is due to all foreign Powers. Then we have, associated with this grievous lack, a disregard, a neglect—it may, perhaps, even be said a contempt—for the rights of Parliament. Lastly, along with all this, we create a belief rather strengthened than weakened by the evident absence of any eagerness on the part of her Majesty's Government to give us financial information that the result of those operations of the Government, so unsound in their foundation, so wild in their aims, is likely to be an increase of responsibility, with no addition, but rather a diminution of strength; a loss of respect abroad; a shock to constitutional instincts and practices at home; and also an augmentation of the burdens which are borne with such exemplary patience by a too confiding people.'

Notwithstanding this powerful speech, when the vete came to be taken, it was found that the Ministerial phalanx was unbroken. The numbers were—For Lord Hartington's resolution, 195; against, 338.

Amongst other descriptions of Mr. Gladstone's address, the *Spectator* said it was 'a terse and vivid specimen of statement, argument, and denunciation,' and added, upon the debate generally, that 'reason, prudence, and patriotism have hardly ever in our time been voted down with so little show of argument, or even of plausible suggestion.' 'For the first time in a hundred years,' said the same journal in reviewing the session, 'at a very great crisis of English history, Parliament has been treated as Napoleon III. used to treat his Senate and *Corps Législatif*, as a mere supplement to the Crown and Administration, instead of as the keystone of the Constitution.' The Government was omnipotent; and the Conservative majority performed its bidding with unwavering patience and submission.

Lord Beaconsfield's Imperial policy proceeded apace.* Russia had been successful in Europe, but the

* Various are the renderings and definitions of an 'Imperial' policy; but we may supplement the observation of the *Spectator*, given above, by the following passage from Mr. S. Laing's address to his constituents, which is doubtless representative of Liberal opinion generally on this matter:—'When I talk of an Imperial policy I attach a distinct meaning to the words. I mean a policy which in its fundamental ideas and modes of proceeding resembles that of the last French Empire; a policy which trades upon national vanity and national prejudices, and seeks by a series of national surprises to divert attention from domestic matters, and prop up the fortunes of a dynasty or a Ministry.' Mr. Laing further remarked that since Lord Derby's retirement from the Cabinet, the history of England had 'read like the chapters of a sensational novel or the scenes of a stirring melodrama;' and he added that he had done what he could 'to assert the foreign policy of Canning against that of Castlereagh, of Gladstone against that of Beaconsfield.' These words are the more significant as coming from one who a few years ago opposed Mr. Gladstone, and they demonstrate, moreover, a close approximation of sentiment amongst the various classes of Liberals throughout the country.

Government conceived a plan by which they hoped to checkmate her in Asia. When we say that a war was forced upon Afghanistan, we are endeavouring to use the impartial language which we believe will be used by history. With regard to this unhappy country, England repeated her oppressive policy of forty years ago. Acting upon the impression that Shere Ali was the secret friend of Russia, we sought grounds for quarrelling with him. A strong nation never lacks pretences of affront when it has to deal with a weak one, and England was not long in precipitating hostilities with the Afghans upon grounds miserably weak and inadequate. It was the war of 1838–41 which rankled in the minds of the rulers of Afghanistan, and made them steadily resolve to refuse British Residents, which they had a perfect right to do. The rejection of Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission, so far from being unprovoked, was the reply of the Ameer to English policy, which had long projected an advance into his territory. In furtherance of this policy, on the part of Lord Beaconsfield's Government, the Viceroy was instructed to find some pretext for despatching a Mission to the Ameer. The result of our subsequent proceedings is well known. Even when the Ameer was ready to make concessions, the opportunity was denied him. We went to war with Afghanistan; Shere Ali lost his life; we concluded the Treaty of Gandamak with his successor, Yakoob Khan, whereby the English Government secured its demands. But the old and ineradicable hatred of

the Afghans to the British led—ostensibly through other pretexts, of course—to the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his escort at Cabul. We have now discovered that the people of Afghanistan do not receive us as deliverers from their own rulers; and although we may take swift vengeance upon them for recent events, and procure a temporary settlement of affairs, what policy can we adopt to ensure that such settlement shall be a lasting and a permanent one? India may not only prove fatal to the existence of the present Ministry—which is responsible for the late and present Afghan wars—but may yet bring the severest chastisement which our national pride has received. All Englishmen hope that such a catastrophe may be averted; but if Justice be immutable, and it be impossible to divert her from her course, we have yet much to answer for in regard to Indian policy.

With respect to the war waged with Shere Ali, Lord Lawrence—who in this case may be fairly taken as the representative of those most thoroughly acquainted both with this and other Indian questions—appealed to the Government to arrest their action; but Lord Beaconsfield replied that the press was not the place in which to discuss these matters, although the Premier himself had conduced to this by his Parliamentary reticence. Mr. Gladstone, however, could not remain quiescent under the adventurous policy of the Premier. Speaking at Rhyl, he condemned the Ministerial action which, having first made the Queen an empress, then manipulated

the prerogative in a manner wholly unexampled in this age, and employed it in inaugurating policies about which neither the nation nor the Parliament had ever been consulted.

The right hon. gentleman went on to say that he did not throw upon the Government the full responsibility for those times of almost unexampled depression from which England suffered in 1878-9: but he contended that the erratic policy of the Government had greatly aggravated the hardness of those times. He asked how commerce could flourish when no exporter knew whether war might not break out before his merchandise reached the port to which it was consigned; and he asserted that every £10,000,000 spent unproductively in needless military or naval expenditure really represented a loss of double the amount—for £10,000,000 productively invested would have produced another £10,000,000 worth of wealth and something more.

Mr. Gladstone's arguments, however, might as well have been addressed to empty air. The Conservative majority did not feel—or felt it by comparison only in an infinitesimal degree—the pressure of the times, and they had imbibed an idea that the honour of England must be protected. By many persons it was considered that it had never really been assailed; but the Beaconsfield Administration having on several occasions declared it to be in danger, there was no lack of readiness to vote men and money to defend it. So the order was given for distant peoples to be

attacked, English blood to be spilt, the burdens of the people (already too heavy) to be swollen, and the future liabilities of this country to be enormously increased.

At the Lord Mayor's Banquet, in November, Lord Beaconsfield explained with regard to our Indian difficulties, that the Government were not apprehensive of any invasion of India by its north-western frontier; but the frontier was a 'haphazard and not a scientific one,' and the Government were desirous of obtaining a really satisfactory frontier. It is difficult now to understand Lord Beaconsfield's desire to obtain a 'rectification of frontier' except on the ground of buttressing up his Administration, and, by keeping the nation in a fever of excitement, thus to prevent a fierce introspective light from being brought to bear upon his policy. Mr. Gladstone, in writing to the Bedford Liberal Association, pertinently asked the question, why, if an invasion from the north-west were considered impracticable, the frontier there should be described as unscientific, and how any foe could so embarrass and disturb our dominion as to put us to great expense on a frontier which it was impossible for him to invade? The right hon. gentleman thus continued:—'What right have we to annex by war or to menace the territory of our neighbours, in order to make "scientific" a frontier which is already safe? What should we say of such an act if done by another Power? Our frontier, we are told, causes anxiety to our Viceroys. I ask, which among the Viceroys who have taken and quitted office, and sometimes life, with

so much honour, since we reached our North-Western Frontier, have recommended such a rectification? Upon the whole, I must say that the great day of "sense and truth," instead of relaxing the reserve unhappily maintained, has added a new, and, to all appearance, a dangerous, mystery to those which before prevailed; has left us more than ever at the mercy of anonymous paragraphs; and is, so far, likely to increase rather than dispel the gloom which is settling on the country. That we are bound to observe and promote the observance of the Treaty of Berlin there is no doubt. We should do it with better grace if we had not ourselves broken the Treaty of Paris, and violated the honourable understanding under which the Powers met in Congress, by the Anglo-Turkish Convention.' Mr. Gladstone went on to observe that the best barrier against Russia was to be found in the establishment of local liberties that men will value, and will fight for, and will not willingly surrender either to Russia or to any other Power. He also referred to the apparent inaction of the Government in relation to the report of the Rhodope Commission, and regretted their indifference to a commercial distress greatly intensified by their own reckless expenditure. But the only effective criticism upon the Government, he observed, would be the criticism of the polling booths.

To that appeal, however, the Government did not submit themselves. England was shortly afterwards at war with Shere Ali, the Ameer having declined to receive an English mission. This was no new decision,

however, as we have seen, nor ought it fairly to have been construed as an insult to us, seeing that the Ameer had always protested against receiving a British Envoy.

Mr. Gladstone having announced his intention of retiring from the representation of Greenwich at the next election, on the 30th of November he paid a farewell visit to his constituency. At a luncheon given at the Ship Hotel by the Liberal Association, the right hon. gentleman proposed the toast of 'Prosperity to the Borough of Greenwich Liberal Association,' and in doing so enlarged upon the necessity for Liberal union. The Liberals, owing to their dissensions, gave twenty-six votes to their opponents in 1874. Now when they remembered that Governments had been carried on for years with a smaller majority than twenty-six, they would see how important the subject of organisation became. With regard to the Birmingham plan, he warned Liberals against its precipitate or imperfect adoption. Whenever a minority only of the party in any town joined such an association, it was plain that that town was not yet ripe for the introduction of the new system; and if the plan continued to be forced under those circumstances, more harm than good must result from the false application of the principle. In the evening, Mr. Gladstone attended a great public meeting in the Plumstead Skating Rink. On his entrance the whole audience rose and cheered for several minutes. An address was presented to the ex-Premier expressing regret at the severance of his

connection with the borough of Greenwich, and the pride which the borough would ever feel at having been associated with his name and fame.

Mr. Gladstone began his reply by an allusion to Lord Beaconsfield's phrase of five years ago, respecting 'harassed interests.' At present he (the speaker) knew of only one harassed interest, viz., the British nation. The question how the country was to be governed should occupy the people at the next election. Although he protested against the words 'personal government' being taken to imply that the Sovereign desired to depart from the traditions of the Constitution, he charged her Majesty's advisers with having insidiously begun a system intended to narrow the liberties of the people of England, and to reduce Parliament to the condition of the French parliaments before the great Revolution. Replying to the charge that he and his supporters were the friends of Russia, Mr. Gladstone showed that it was the Government who had been the real friends of that Power, having brought her back to the Danube, from which she was driven in 1856; left it in her power to make herself the liberator of Bulgaria; and, by the device of creating the province of Eastern Roumelia, had given her an opportunity for intriguing pretty effectively among that portion of the Bulgarians still left under the rule of the Sultan.

The Afghan war was dwelt upon with great fulness. Mr. Gladstone, having expressed his fear that it was a wholly unjust war, pointed out that it had

been waged by the Government in furtherance of a settled intention on its part to force the Ameer to receive European Residents in his cities, contrary to the treaty arrangements entered into with him, and in opposition to his known preference for native agents. He denied that the late Government had refused to give conditional assistance to the Ameer, and also that the Viceroy was instructed to postpone the subject. In 1874, as was proved from a despatch by Sir R. Pollock, the Ameer leaned as much as ever on the British Government. The Ameer gave as his reason for refusing to receive an English mission at all four letters which had been addressed to him in a threatening tone by the Commissioner of Peshawur, at the instance of the Viceroy; and these letters were omitted from the Blue-book. If Russia sent a mission to Cabul, why had we not called Russia to account? asked Mr. Gladstone, the question being followed by vehement cheering.

'If an offence has been committed, I want to know whose has been the greater share of that offence? The Ameer was under no covenant that he was not to receive a Russian Mission; we were under a covenant with him not to force on him a British Mission. He was under no covenant not to receive a Russian Mission; Russia was under a covenant with us to exercise no influence in Afghanistan. If there was an offence, whose was the offence? The offence, if any, was committed by the great and powerful Emperor of the North, with his eighty millions of people, with his 1,400,000 or 1,500,000 soldiers, and fresh from his recent victories; and not by the poor, trembling, shuddering Ameer of Afghanistan, with his few troops, over which he exercises a precarious rule. But now, having received from the Czar of Russia the greater offence, we sing small to Russia, and ask her to withdraw her Mission; and when she says it is only a Mission of courtesy, we seemingly rest content, but we march our thousands into Afghanistan. Anything so painful and so grievous has not come under my notice.'

The responsibility for this war he threw absolutely upon the Cabinet; but Parliament would shortly be asked what it thought of these transactions, and he was not sanguine as to the reply. However, the appeal to Parliament was not the final appeal. Mr. Gladstone maintained that we had departed from the manners of our forefathers; the policy of the present Government was not that which had been adopted by Lord Chatham and Mr. Burke, and by Lord Derby when he appealed to both Houses of Parliament in 1857. Mr. Gladstone thus forcibly concluded his address:—

'This question cannot be settled by injunctions to be dumb; it cannot be settled by the production of garbled evidence; it cannot be settled by a chorus of leading articles written to-day, and forgotten, or contradicted, or disavowed to-morrow; it cannot be settled by military success—for, thank God, the arbitrament of the sword is not the supreme or the sole arbitrament of the affairs of civilised nations; it cannot be settled by Parliamentary majorities. But that responsibility, which at this moment is an undivided responsibility resting upon ten or twelve men, will next week or the week afterwards very likely be divided between them and the two Houses of Parliament, and within no long period—it may be within a very short period—the people of England will have to say whether they will take upon themselves their share of that responsibility. And remember that, if they do, their share will be the largest of all. They are the tribunal of final appeal. Upon them, upon every constituency, upon every man in every constituency, who gives his sanction to an unjust war, the guilt and the shame will lie. No; there is something a great deal higher than all those external manifestations by which we are apt to be swayed and carried away; something that is higher, something that is more inward, something that is more enduring. External success cannot always silence the monitor that lies within. You all know the noble tragedy of our great Shakespeare, in which Lady Macbeth, after having achieved the utmost external success, after having waded through blood to a crown, and that crown at the moment seemingly undisputed, yet is so troubled with the silent action of conscience residing within the breast that reason itself is shaken in its seat, and she appears at night wandering through the

chambers of her castle. What does she say? There she had nothing to warn her from without, nothing to alarm her. Her success had been complete. She had reached the top of what some think to be human felicity, and what all admit to be human authority. What does she say in that condition? "Here's the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." And the physician appointed to wait on her, in the few simple pregnant words of the poet, says, "This disease is beyond my practice." Yes, gentlemen, the disease of an evil conscience is beyond the practice of all the physicians of all the countries in the world. The penalty may linger; but, if it lingers, it only lingers to drive you on further into guilt, and to make retribution when it comes more severe and more disastrous. It is written in the eternal laws of the universe of God that sin shall be followed by suffering. An unjust war is a tremendous sin. The question which you have to consider is whether this war is just or unjust. So far as I am able to collect the evidence, it is unjust. It fills me with the greatest alarm lest it should be proved to be grossly and totally unjust. If so, we should come under the stroke of the everlasting law that suffering shall follow sin; and the day will arrive —come it soon or come it late—when the people of England will discover that national injustice is the surest road to national downfall.'

A brief sitting of Parliament was held in December, when a long debate ensued upon the war in Afghanistan. Mr. Whitbread moved the following amendment to the Address:—'That this House disapproves the conduct of her Majesty's Government, which has resulted in the war with Afghanistan.'

Mr. Gladstone followed up his vigorous speech to his constituents by one quite worthy of it from his place in the House of Commons. There were three points, he said, on which the public decision as to the nature of this war ought to rest. First, the extraordinary confusion and inconsistencies of the evidence on which the Government had framed their case for this unjust and disastrous war; secondly, the extraordinary and prolonged secrecy in which a policy had

been enveloped, the earlier disclosure of which would have put Parliament on its guard, and elicited remonstrances which must, in all probability, have stopped the war; thirdly, the direct evidence of injustice in relation to the origin of the war, the deliberate breach with the policy of forbearance towards Afghanistan, the alarming menaces addressed to the Ameer of Afghanistan both by words and deeds, the mildness of the remonstrance with Russia, into whose arms we had driven the Afghan prince, and the severe retribution which we were visiting upon the *protégé*, whilst we complacently accepted the explanations of the patron, on condition, of course, that we were permitted to flog the *protégé* without interference from the patron. The right hon. gentleman then drew a striking picture of the miseries and perils to which the last Afghan war had led, and pressed home, with renewed force, the chief conclusions of his Plumstead speech. In answer to Lord John Manners, who had declared that the war must be prosecuted until Shere Ali had made due submission, Mr. Gladstone asked what would be done if the Ameer, instead of making submission, followed precedent, and disappeared? In that case, how long should we have to keep an army of occupation? The principal official documents contained the most gross misstatements of fact, involving reckless negligence. There was no ground whatever for alleging that at the Peshawur Conference it became evident that the Ameer was dissatisfied with his relations with us. So

far from being discontented, he begged us to let things alone. Such was the position of affairs up to the end of 1876; and if the papers relating to the Peshawur Conference had been laid before Parliament shortly after its close, he ventured to say we should have had no Afghan war. When the Ameer was ready to make concessions, the opportunity was denied him, the Conference was hastily closed, the promises of Lords Mayo and Northbrook were revoked, measures of hostility were adopted, Quettah was occupied, and our native agent was withdrawn from Cabul. Lastly, not the least discreditable act of the English Government was their treating the reception of the Russian Mission as an offence, and their visiting it with punishment at the very time when they had accepted the transparent pretext of Russia that their Mission to Cabul was within the meaning of the arrangement made with the late Government. The Russians forced the Mission upon Shere Ali, who unwillingly accepted it. The Russians, however, asked permission before sending their envoy; but we did not do so, and the Ameer's subordinates had no authority to let our Mission pass. Now Ministers called that an insult which was merely the result of the grossest blundering. Further, they had tamely acquiesced in Russia's new and unfounded claim to send to Cabul missions of courtesy under the convention with the late Government. Mr. Gladstone, in his peroration, spoke earnestly and eloquently upon the historical and moral aspects of the question:—

'You have made this war in concealment from Parliament, in reversal of the policy of every Indian and Home Government that has existed for the last twenty-five years, in contempt of the supplication of the Ameer, and in defiance of the advice of your own agent, and all for the sake of obtaining a scientific frontier. We made war in error upon Afghanistan in 1838. To err is human and pardonable. But we have erred a second time upon the same ground and with no better justification. This error has been repeated in the face of every warning conceivable and imaginable, and in the face of an unequalled mass of authorities. May Heaven avert a repetition of the calamity which befell our army in 1841! . . . . I remember a beautiful description of one of our modern poets of a great battle-field during the Punic wars, in which he observed that for the moment Nature was laid waste and nothing but the tokens of carnage were left upon the ground; but day by day and hour by hour she began her kindly task, and removed one by one and put out of sight those hideous tokens, and restored the scene to order, to beauty, and to peace. It was such a process that the Viceroys of India had been carrying on for years in Afghanistan. I now ask—is all this to be undone? The sword is drawn, and misery is to come upon this unhappy country again. The struggle may perhaps be short. God grant that it may be short! God grant that it may not be sharp! But you, having once entered upon it, cannot tell whether it will be short or long. You have again brought in devastation and again created a necessity which, I hope, will be met by other men, with other minds, in happier days; that other Viceroys and other Governments, but other Viceroys especially—such men as Canning, Lawrence, Mayo, and Northbrook—will undo this evil work in which you are now engaged. It cannot be undone in a moment, although the torch of a madman may burn down an edifice which it has taken the genius, the skill, the labour, and the lavish prodigality of ages to erect. . . . . I should have hope of this division if I really believed that many hon. members had made themselves individually masters of the case which is disclosed in the recesses of those two volumes of Parliamentary papers. They have not done, and cannot do this, and, therefore, this vote will go as other votes have gone. You will obtain the warrant of Parliament and the triumph of military success for the moment. That military success has not been quite so unchecked up to the present, but it has in substance corresponded to that which led us on in 1838, and blinded us to the perilous nature of the step which we were taking. Be that as it may, however, you will probably obtain sanction and the warrant which you seek. The responsibility, which is now yours alone, will be shared with you by the majority of this House; but many who will decline to share in it will hope for the ultimate disapproval and reversal of your course by the nation. But, even if the nation should refuse such reversal, those members of this House

who oppose your course will believe that they have performed a duty incumbent upon men who believe that truth and justice are the only sure foundations of international relations, and that there is no possession so precious, either for peoples or for men, as a just and honourable name.'

This powerful speech greatly impressed both sides of the House, but the majority—not, it was believed, without some compunction—endorsed the policy of the Government. In the course of the debate, Mr. Leatham made a witty comparison. The Cabinet, he said, reminded him of the gentleman who, seeing his horses run away, and being assured by his coachman that they must drive into something, replied, 'Then smash into something cheap!' The discussion closed with very able speeches by Lord Hartington and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the vote of censure was defeated by 328 votes to 227. On a motion by the Government that the revenues of India should be applied for the purposes of the war, Mr. Fawcett moved an amendment to the effect that it would be unjust that the revenues of India should be applied to defray the extraordinary expenses of the military operations being carried on against the Ameer of Afghanistan. Mr. Gladstone seconded the motion, and observed that it was the people of England who had had all the glory and all the advantage which had resulted from the destruction of the late Government, and the accession to office of the present Administration; and it was they who must measure all the *pros* and the *cons*, and who must be content, after having reaped benefits so immeasurable, to encounter the

disadvantage of meeting charges which undoubtedly the existing Administration would leave behind it as a legacy to posterity. For Mr. Fawcett's amendment there voted 125; against, 235—majority for the Government, 110.

England gained her ends in the Afghan war, and humiliated Russia; but there are those who naturally predict that the direct result of our policy will be further Russian advances in Central Asia. Russia, they urge, will never rest until she has strongly established herself upon the Afghan frontier. Meanwhile, we may repress the Afghans by force, but hostile measures will never make them friendly to us.*

Early in the session of 1879 the Greek question came before the House of Commons on the following motion by Mr. Cartwright:—'That in the opinion of this House, tranquillity in the East demands that satisfaction be given to the just claims of Greece, and no satisfaction can be considered adequate that does not ensure execution of the recommendations embodied in Protocol 13 of the Berlin Congress.' Mr. Gladstone, in supporting this motion, said he was sanguine enough to believe that even in the present House of Commons there might be found

* As to the value of our scientific frontier, it has been pointed out that, so far is it from facilitating an invasion of Afghanistan, it has already cost the Indian Government the services of four good brigades. On the Candahar, Khurum, and Khyber routes we have a total army of 33,000 men to be maintained and accoutred; while the force really fighting its way to Cabul will not number 10,000, and will only have one line of retreat or communication.

a disposition on the part of many hon. members to encourage the first of legitimate aspirations on the part of the Hellenic races after freedom, and he hoped that the declaration of the Government would be such as to give satisfaction to the House and to the country. The Treaty of Berlin contained recommendations which were valuable and important in the interests of the liberty and happiness of Greece, and, so far as he knew, there was yet no evidence whatever that the English Government—the whole of whose traditions were connected, inseparably connected, with freedom—had acted energetically in support of the provisions of that treaty. The Porte had gone back upon its usual resources of craft, and inert but obstinate resistance, and every device that ingenuity could suggest had been used to evade giving effect to the recommendations of the Treaty of Berlin. Our Government had given a pledge to the Government of Greece to support and to advance, within reasonable limits, the territorial claims of Greece. That pledge, down to the present time, remained entirely unredeemed; but there was time for us to redeem it. It certainly was not redeemed at the Congress. There was now no one of the European Powers antagonistic to the claims of Greece. France laboured, and had always consistently and energetically done so, to promote them, and their complete success depended upon the conduct of her Majesty's Government. He (Mr. Gladstone) wished to convey to the House his opinion that the claims

on the part of the Greek Kingdom and the Greek races were a very strong claim indeed. We had now got rid of the superstition that all these Greek and Christian populations of Turkey would fling themselves into the arms of Russia. The time that had elapsed for the fulfilment of our promise to Greece was already too long, and there was no justification for it. After reviewing the greatly improved condition of Greece—with its free press, an increasing population, a trade and a marine enormously augmented, and a flourishing University—Mr. Gladstone said, 'I do not contend that the civilisation of Greece is effective for all purposes; on the contrary, the Greeks are behindhand, and have so much to do that their resources may be strained in the accomplishment of their objects. The Government will not give countenance, I hope, to coloured and unfair representations of the condition of Greece, but will join us in deprecating them.'

The character of England was undoubtedly tied to the redemption of its pledge given to Greece, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer said the matter was one which was engaging, and which would continue to engage, the earnest sympathy and full attention of her Majesty's Government, and he trusted that this assurance would satisfy the House. The motion was rejected, and Greece still awaits the fulfilment of her legitimate aspirations.

In the course of a debate raised by Sir Charles Dilke, towards the close of July, on the obligations

of Turkey under the treaty of Berlin, Mr. Gladstone again earnestly enforced the claims of Greece. The right hon. gentleman observed that 'Greece, weak as she may be, is yet strong in the principles on which she rests. She has the assertions made by the Turkish Government; she has the strong sympathy of the populations concerned; she has the assertion of the uselessness of these populations to the Sultan; she has on record the engagements by this country, now some thirteen months ago, promising our careful consideration, which is well known to mean the favourable consideration of some of her territorial claims.' The recent course of England upon the Greek Question furnishes a very unsatisfactory chapter in our history. Our duty to the Hellenic race was clear, and more strenuous efforts should have been made for its fulfilment. So long as this question remains unsettled, what but war can be expected between Turkey and Greece? But there are even wider aspects in which this Greek question may be viewed. Panhellenism would unquestionably be a powerful counteracting force in Eastern Europe to Panslavism. The dream, no doubt, is sanguine, but a Greece which should include the present territory, together with Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, and the Archipelago as far as the shores of Anatolia, has always received the sympathy and adhesion of a large section of Greek patriots. Such a programme no English Ministry would at present support; but Greece has, notwithstanding, reasonable ground of com-

plaint over the defeat of her hopes at the Berlin Congress.

Several other discussions of importance, in which Mr. Gladstone took part, arose during the session. In the middle of May, Mr. Dillwyn introduced a motion affirming the necessity of more strict observance of the mode and limits of the action of the Prerogative, in order to prevent the growing abuse and extension of it by her Majesty's Ministers, under cover of the supposed personal interposition of the Sovereign. Commenting upon the chequered history of the resolution, Mr. Gladstone said that to put such a motion ultimately on the paper in the morning, and to ask the House to vote it in the evening, was so entirely contrary to the rules of Parliamentary procedure that he declined to have anything to do with it. There was no connection, he further pointed out, between the abuse of the Prerogative and the supposed intervention of the Sovereign. Though he had not been backward in assailing the undue use of the Prerogative under the existing Government, in every case it had been sustained by large majorities, and the censure, if there was to be any, ought to be directed against the majority, which had assumed the responsibility.

In the debate on the Zulu War, Mr. Gladstone expressed consideration and sympathy for Sir Bartle Frere in the difficulties in which he was placed; and though he did not agree with him in his views upon South Africa, he was convinced that when he returned

to this country he would continue to attract to himself the admiration of his fellow-countrymen. He further maintained that our relations with Cetewayo must be regulated by his relations to ourselves, and not by his cruelties to his own people; and he agreed that when the safety of the colony was assured, the Government ought to be guided by considerations of moderation and mercy. He believed, however, that it might be difficult for the Government to make any declarations at that time.

The Speaker having ordered notes to be taken, for his own private use, of the proceedings and debates of the House, the Home Rulers interpreted his action as being aimed specially against themselves. Mr. Parnell accordingly brought forward a resolution that this proceeding was without precedent, was a breach of the privileges of Parliament, and a danger to the liberty and independence of debate. Rising during the discussion, Mr. Gladstone said that he had sat in the House during the rule of five different Speakers, and this was the first occasion upon which he could recollect the submission of a motion to the House impugning in any way the conduct of the gentleman who filled the chair. It was a very grave occasion; but he noticed that there had been withdrawn from the motion the words that the act of the Speaker constituted a danger to the liberty of debate. Now the Speaker either possessed their confidence or he did not; and while no one could regard with pleasure an occurrence of this kind, it brought

with it this satisfaction, that in the discharge of his weighty duties, the Speaker would find his hands not weakened but strengthened. Strange, indeed, would be their position if the House now made a condemnation of the practice which had undoubtedly been within the knowledge of many of the leading members of the House from time to time, and had never yet attracted a word of disapproval. The best thing to do would be to subject the motion to a direct negative. Addressing the Speaker direct, the right hon. gentleman said there could be but one sentiment, viz., that he was desirous of discharging his functions in the most efficient manner; and they therefore desired to reciprocate that feeling by every declaration in their power. The House demonstrated, by 292 votes to 24, its confidence in the Speaker.

On the consideration of the Report of the Army Discipline Bill, Lord Hartington moved a resolution to the effect that no bill could be satisfactory which provided for the permanent retention of corporal punishment. In the course of the debate, Mr. Gladstone, arguing for the abolition of the punishment of flogging, said the Government had never contradicted the statement that at one time they had arrived at the decision to abolish flogging, nor had they once stated that the punishment was necessary for the maintenance of discipline. After what had recently occurred, it could not be retained long, and, believing this degrading punishment to be contrary to our recent policy of raising the character of the army

in every possible way, he gave his cordial support to the resolution.

In the end, notwithstanding, the retention of the punishment was voted by 289 votes to 183.

The financial policy of the Government—intimately connected as it was with its course on foreign affairs—was formally arraigned upon Mr. Rylands's motion on the national expenditure. Mr. Gladstone, in supporting it, said that the Ministry was not now charged with not meeting the necessities of the year by imposing additional taxation, but with the great increase in the national expenditure. He objected to it both in regard to quantity and quality; and under the first head he showed that the augmentation of the military charges amounted to over six millions, while with regard to the reduction in the present year's estimates, he characterised it as 'a death-bed repentance.' He next proceeded to challenge the causes of the expenditure from first to last, vigorously denouncing the foreign policy of the last few years, and asserting that it had neither increased the power of the country, nor improved our relations with a single country in the world. He further objected to the mode of balancing the public accounts, by which he maintained that the real deficiency was concealed from the country. The Exchequer bonds were an essential part of the deficiency of the year, and as to the estimated surplus of £1,900,000, it had no existence at all. The Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have presented an estimate of the expenses of the

Zulu war; and in speaking of it in a mere general way as a charge which could not be calculated, he had departed from universal precedent. By bringing in two budgets every year, Sir Stafford Northcote was destroying the control of Parliament over the expenditure and income, and was reversing the best financial precedents of our history. So also his *via media* of meeting the deficiency by Exchequer bonds was a financial revolution, and was at daggers drawn with the principles of Sir Robert Peel. The primary rules of that great financier were to make proper estimates for the charge of the year, and to bring the income of the year up to the charge; to let the public have the benefit of the bulk of the surpluses when they occurred; and, if new wants arose, to meet them, not by increased taxes, but by savings in other directions. In conclusion, Mr. Gladstone observed, 'If the country approves this financial revolution, that as I have shown by hard facts and figures is in progress, the country is its own master, and can return again a Parliament like-minded with the present, to perpetuate an Administration under which we enjoy such bounteous store of financial as well as other blessings. I do not undertake to predict what this Parliament will do, or what the nation will do, in considering its own interest, and in making provision for its own future; but, unless I am mistaken, the doctrines that are now promulgated on the part of the Government are financial delusions, and, if so they be, I can only say I am convinced of

this, that the longer they last, the more complete sway they obtain for a time under the administration and influence of the party opposite, the sharper will be the reaction when it comes, the more complete the reversal of your momentary triumph, and the more severe the retribution politically inflicted upon the party that has invented these erroneous doctrines, and that has too fatally carried them into effect.' At a later stage in the consideration of the budget, Mr. Gladstone contrasted the financial history of 1860 with that of 1879, and showed that the former afforded no justification for the budget of the later year. In 1860 new taxes were imposed, and there was, therefore, a real distribution of charge between the present and future; but the budget of 1879 imposed no new taxes, so that no fair parallel could be drawn between them. In 1860, so far from there being remissions of taxation almost exceeding the new taxes by two millions and more—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated—Mr. Gladstone pointed out that while £2,415,000 had been remitted, the war rates of tea and sugar had been continued, the income-tax had been raised by 5d., other duties had been increased, and in all fresh taxes had been imposed to the amount of £8,775,000, leaving a balance of £6,360,000 of increased taxation in that year. This was the justification for borrowing money on terminable annuities for the fortifications; but no such plea could now be advanced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr. Gladstone's denunciations of the Government

have to some appeared unmeasured and unwarrantable; but those who thus judge him forget that, whether rightly or wrongly, his successors have traversed every political and financial principle to which he has steadfastly adhered through a public career extending over nearly half a century. Those who most differ from him on questions of foreign policy cannot deny that, with regard to financial and domestic measures, the country has exhibited a confidence in him rarely paralleled in our political annals. The great acts of his Administration, and his beneficent fiscal reforms, stand almost alone; and they appear all the nobler and the greater when contrasted with the policy of his successors. The country has not yet ventured to look the results of Conservative financial policy in the face; when it does so, it cannot but bitterly regret the decision which, in 1874, deprived it of the services of the greatest of living statesmen and financiers.

In conclusion, it may be asked, What are the real results of the 'brilliant foreign policy' which the present Government has pursued? Sir Bartle Frere perversely and precipitately forced upon us the Zulu war—a war which many of the usual supporters of the Ministry have condemned. The war, happily, is now virtually over, and we have captured the brave Zulu king. But what is to be the end of our interference in South Africa? If Federation should ultimately be established, we cannot reflect with satisfaction upon some of the means by which this object

will have been gained. Whatever may be the final outcome of the Ministerial policy in South Africa, the unjust war with the Zulus forms a dark spot in our history. Coming to India, what do we find? The treaty of Gandamak is shrivelled up; and although we may hope for a settlement of actual, and perhaps yet greater impending difficulties, it is almost hoping against hope. England, too, though a great and a rich nation, is neither all-powerful, nor inexhaustible in wealth. The question must sooner or later arise, How long can the people bear the drain upon it which an Imperial policy involves? When that limit arrives, there will be a strong and irresistible revulsion of national feeling, with a consequent reversal of the policy of an Administration whose name is written in blood. It may be that this time is close upon us. Even in the midst of the Saturnalia over our foreign triumphs, the handwriting begins to appear upon the wall.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MR. GLADSTONE'S MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS, ETC.

Characteristics of Mr. Gladstone's Essays—Articles on the Life of the Prince Consort—The County Franchise—'Kin Beyond Sea'—Personal and Literary Essays—Estimates of Macaulay and Tennyson—Wedgwood and his Work—Mr. Gladstone on Art—Its Relations to English Manufactures—Historical and Speculative Essays—*Ecce Homo*—Articles on Foreign Questions—Germany, France, and England—The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem—Aggression in Egypt—Miscellaneous Essays—Comparison between Greece and Palestine—'England's Mission'—Mr. Gladstone on the Policy of the Ministry—Home Questions awaiting Settlement—Speech at Chester—Charges against the Government—Effects of the Premier's 'Imperial' Policy—Close of the Survey of Mr. Gladstone's Literary and Political Career.

THE plenitude and variety of Mr. Gladstone's intellectual powers have been the subject of such frequent comment that it would be superfluous to insist upon them here. On the political side of his career his life has been as unresting and active as that of any other great party leader; and, if we regard him in the literary aspect, we are equally astonished at his energy and versatility. Putting out of view his various works upon Homer, his miscellaneous writings of themselves, with the reading they involve, would entitle their author to take high rank on the score of industry with the majority of the literary craft. As a writer, indeed, fluency may be said to be his besetting sin. Great ideas do not come either to the world or to individuals in battalions; they are the product of thought, action,

comparison. So, while we stand amazed at the infinity of topics which have received Mr. Gladstone's attention, we do not always acquire from his essays that high dry light which it is the privilege of the greatest critics to shed upon the subjects and the men they undertake to interpret.

A recent reviewer, while scarcely doing Mr. Gladstone justice in certain respects, furnishes some apposite observations—or partially apposite at least—upon the general character of his essays, as well as their style. 'It is,' he says, 'the light they throw on Mr. Gladstone and upon his habits and modes of thought, far more than any light they throw upon the special subjects they deal with, that gives these essays their strongest claim. And this internal unity of thought and temperament is made the more prominent by the comparative absence of any corresponding unity of style. Indeed, of a style, in the strict sense of the term, Mr. Gladstone has almost little or none, and the reader is almost startled to find how well he gets along without it. Sometimes we have a sentence so long and involved that nothing but a passionate intensity of meaning and a profuse vocabulary could have averted a disastrous collapse. Elsewhere, as for instance in his controversy with Mr. Lowe, the "Tempter," as Mr. Gladstone might say, leads him to imitate, with very partial success, the nimble dialectics of his skilful opponent. His writing, it is true, is often vigorous and trenchant, his phrases not unfrequently happy and well turned; but a distinc-

tive style, such for instance as Lord Macaulay's, he most certainly has not.'* The essays remind the reader more of the flowing eloquence and the declamation of a Burke, than of the massiveness, the dignity, and the majesty of a Bacon.

The whole of Mr. Gladstone's miscellaneous writings—with the exception of essays of a strictly controversial and classical kind—have recently been collected in a uniform edition.† The first volume has no fewer than four articles upon the life and character of the Prince Consort, two of them being based upon Mr. Martin's life. The critic writes sympathetically upon the virtues of the Prince, who was deserving of the eulogy passed upon him, and who undoubtedly raised the life of the Court, and the influence and usefulness of our highest institution, to their highest point. He also laments the loss which society has sustained from the slackening of that beneficial action to which the Prince so powerfully contributed. These essays are followed by three papers on the County Franchise, being a response to the deliverances of Mr. Lowe upon this subject. Mr. Gladstone claims to regard this question with strict impartiality, for he looks upon it as one which calls upon him for adhesion as an individual, but not for the guidance of others in any larger capacity. He warns Englishmen, however, against one of the greatest moral dangers that can beset the politics of a self-governed country—the

* The *Athenæum*, Feb. 1879.

† *Gleanings of Past Years.* In seven volumes. London: 1879.

danger of having a great question insincerely dealt with. The Conservatives are ready to step in between the Liberal leaders and their work, and to do the exact opposite of that which was done by Sir Robert Peel in 1829 and 1846:—'They will handle the subject, to the best of their judgment, as one which may legitimately be used, either by adoption or by a faint and procrastinating repulse, as shall best suit the interests of their party.' The speech of the present majority will say one thing, while its heart conceals another. In legislating upon this subject, Mr. Gladstone is not afraid that we shall fall down the precipice into national ruin, inasmuch as we fell down a much greater precipice in 1832, and another one in 1867, and are none the worse for it. His arguments upon the whole question are well worthy of study.

The last essay in this volume, 'Kin Beyond Sea,' is one for which Mr. Gladstone was taken severely to task by many English journals, on its appearance originally in the *North American Review* for September 1878. Reading through this essay now after the excitement it created has calmed down, it seems to us to contain much food for reflection for Englishmen. Mr. Gladstone is not alone in taking the following view of the future of America, and we should do well to heed the advice with which he closes:—'She will probably become what we are now, the head servant in the great household of the world, the employer of all employed; because her services will be the most and ablest. We have no more title against her

than Venice, or Genoa, or Holland has had against us. One great duty is entailed upon us, which we, unfortunately, neglect; the duty of preparing, by a resolute and sturdy effort, to reduce our public burdens, in preparation for a day when we shall probably have less capacity than we have now to bear them.' Again, 'the England and the America of the present are probably the two strongest nations of the world. But there can hardly be a doubt, as between the America and the England of the future, that the daughter, at some no very distant time, will, whether fairer or less fair, be unquestionably yet stronger than the mother.' Mr. Gladstone argues in support of this position from the concentrated, continuous empire which America possesses, and the enormous progress she has made within a century. The writer's brief review of the British Constitution, and his summary of possible dangers which may beset the mother-country are deserving of careful consideration, especially when we reflect that these things have driven one who is perhaps better acquainted with them than most students of the Constitution, to this general conclusion:—'We of this island are not great political philosophers; and we contend with an earnest but disproportioned vehemence about changes which are palpable, such as the extension of the suffrage, or the re-distribution of Parliamentary seats, neglecting wholly other processes of change which work beneath the surface, and in the dark, but which are even more fertile of great organic results.'

The second volume consists of essays exclusively

personal and literary. The author discourses both pleasantly and profitably upon such differently constituted beings as Blanco White, Giacomo Leopardi, Bishop Patteson, Dr. Norman Macleod, Macaulay, Tennyson, and Wedgwood. While we could willingly linger over each of these names, it is only the last three to which we can give some attention. In treating of Macaulay, Mr. Gladstone is not so incisive as some other English critics—Mr. John Morley, for example; but the essay is written with admirable temper and a certain largeness of spirit. 'Prosperous and brilliant, a prodigy, a meteor, almost a portent, in literary history,' the great Whig historian is described, and yet withal there was much of the commonplace about him; while his fierceness as an advocate prevented him from attaining to that atmosphere of calm impartiality which surrounds the greatest historians. An accurate man, in the long run, is of more service to the world than a fascinating man, though the latter may in the outset absorb all the honours; and this rule will, we think, be found to hold good in all kinds of intellectual effort. Mr. Gladstone observes that 'as the serious flaw in Macaulay's mind was want of depth, so the central defect with which his productions appear to be chargeable, is a pervading strain of more or less exaggeration.' The truth is that 'Macaulay was not only accustomed, like many more of us, to go out hobby-riding, but, from the portentous vigour of the animal he mounted, was liable, more than most of us,

to be run away with.' Once more—in drawing a comparison between Macaulay and Thucydides, the latter of whom was greatly admired by the modern historian—'Ease, brilliancy, pellucid clearness, commanding fascination, the effective marshalling of all facts belonging to the external world as if on parade; all these gifts Macaulay has, and Thucydides has not. But weight, breadth, proportion, deep discernment, habitual contemplation of the springs of character and conduct, and the power to hold the scales of human action with firm and even hand, these must be sought in Thucydides, and are rarely observable in Macaulay.' Yet with all his defects—and they are nearly as pronounced and conspicuous as his excellences—Macaulay remains one of the most considerable figures in English literature in the nineteenth century.

The merits of Mr. Tennyson, as a poet, excite less controversy. As the essayist remarks, 'from his very first appearance he has had the form and fashion of a true poet: the delicate insight into beauty, the refined perception of harmony, the faculty of suggestion, the eye both in the physical and moral world for motion, light, and colour, the sympathetic and close observation of nature, the dominance of the constructive faculty, and that rare gift, the thorough mastery and loving use of his native tongue. His turn for metaphysical analysis is closely associated with a deep ethical insight: and many of his verses form sayings of so high a class that we trust they are destined to contribute a permanent part of the household words of

England.' It is twenty years since these words were written, and each of those years has witnessed something towards their fulfilment. Like Wordsworth, Mr. Tennyson has won his way with the public against the vaticinations of the reviewers, and this way has been a laborious one. Few poets have aimed at perfection so persistently, so devotedly, as Mr. Tennyson. Unquestionably fine as his genius is, it is not inspiration alone, but a spirit of unrelaxing effort which has assisted in raising him to the high position he occupies amongst English singers.

Most valuable, perhaps, of all these gleanings of a personal character is the address on Wedgwood, originally spoken at Burslem, Staffordshire, on the occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the Wedgwood Institute. We not only meet here with many true and beautiful things about art, but with much sound advice calculated to be of profit to all classes of British workmen. Considering the products of industry with reference to their utility, their cheapness, their influence upon the condition of those who produce them, and their beauty, Mr. Gladstone conceives it to be in the last-named department that we are to look for the peculiar pre-eminence, he does not scruple to say the peculiar greatness, of Wedgwood. The association of beauty with convenience is not a matter light and fanciful; beauty is not an accident of things, it pertains to their essence; it pervades the wide range of creation; and wherever it is impaired or banished we perceive proofs of the moral disorder

which disturbs the world. God hath made everything 'beautiful in his time.' 'Among all the devices of creation, there is not one more wonderful, whether it be the movement of the heavenly bodies, or the succession of the seasons and the years, or the adaptation of the world and its phenomena to the conditions of human life, or the structure of the eye, or hand, or any other part of the frame of man—not one of all these is more wonderful than the profuseness with which the Mighty Maker has been pleased to shed over the works of his hands an endless and boundless beauty.' England has long taken a lead among the nations of Europe for the cheapness of her manufactures; and Mr. Gladstone believes that if the day is ever to come when she shall be as eminent in true taste and beauty as she is now in economy of production, that result will probably be due to no other single man in so great a degree as to Wedgwood. In the words of his epitaph, he 'converted a rude and inconsiderable manufacture into an elegant art, and an important branch of national commerce.' Unaided by the national or the royal gifts which were found necessary to uphold the glories of Sèvres, of Chelsea, and of Dresden, he produced works truer, perhaps, to the inexorable laws of art, than the fine fabrics that proceeded from those establishments. The lessons to be deduced from a career of toil, and one devoted to the highest ends, like Wedgwood's, are admirably pointed out and enforced. Mr. Gladstone's address especially deserves praise for its insistence upon the

great truth that the mean and the lowly are not divorced from the beautiful. 'Down to the humblest condition of life, down to the lowest and most backward grade of civilisation, the nature of man craves, and seems even as it were to cry aloud, for something, some sign or token at the least, of what is beautiful, in some of the many spheres of mind or sense.'

In an address delivered at Chester,* Mr. Gladstone once more spoke concerning art in its relations to English manufactures. He denied that the promotion of excellence for its own sake was a visionary idea; for every excellence that was real, whether it related in the first instance to utility or beauty, had got its price, its value in the market. It was an element of strength. In France, the standard of taste, taken as a whole, was very much higher than in England. This was a great national want—a want that had been felt at all times, and a national want that was now specially felt because of the depression of British commerce, and the increased difficulties in finding a way into the markets of many foreign countries. Yet it was a very significant thing that this want should exist, because it was admitted that England is a country which, in the production of beauty in its highest form, showed no deficiency at all. The very highest form in which the beautiful could be produced was that of poetry, and the English poetry of the nineteenth century has been at the head of the poetry of the world. With the

* Opening of an Art Loan Exhibition, August 11, 1879.

English people there was some deficiency in that quality or habit which connects the sense of beauty with the production of works of utility. 'With the English those two things are quite distinct; but in the oldest times of human industry—that is to say, amongst the Greeks—there was no separation whatever, no gap at all, between the idea of beauty and the idea of utility. Whatever the ancient Greek produced he made as useful as he could; and at the same time a cardinal law with him was to make it as beautiful as he could.' In the industrial productions of America there was very little idea of beauty; an American's axe, for example, was not intended to cut away a tree neatly, but quickly. The object was to clear the ground, and that is the history of American industry up to the present time. In England, schools of art were producing an excellent effect upon almost every branch of industry. 'We want a workman to understand that if he can learn to appreciate beauty in industrial productions, he is thereby doing good to himself, first of all in the improvement of his mind, and in the pleasure he derives from his work, and likewise that literally he is increasing his own capital, which is his labour.' He looked to the union of beauty and utility in industrial production as the true way to ensure success in our national enterprise and commerce.

Mr. Gladstone's third series of essays, which are of an historical and speculative character, opens with 'The Theses of Erastus and the Scottish Church

Establishment, 1844.' The writer strongly condemns Erastianism, and though his subject is one which does not profoundly concern the great body of the people, it has a special interest for those who have followed the deep ecclesiastical upheaval in Scotland. The articles on *Ecce Homo* take a wider range, and are written with considerable eloquence and power. That remarkable work is closely examined, with the object of showing that the method and order of religious teaching may vary, as between the period of first introduction, on the one hand, and of established possession and hereditary transmission on the other; that there were seasons in the state of the world, at the period of the Advent, for a careful and delicate regulation of the approaches for the new religion to the mind of man: and that in the matter and succession of the Gospels we may find a succinct testimony to this system of providential adjustment. He next discusses what was the order or economy observed by the Saviour in making known to the world the religion he had come on earth to found. On the great question whether the world has gained on the whole in Christian ages as compared with those of heathenism, Mr. Gladstone cites social changes of a vast and wide range, which decisively settle the problem in favour of Christianity. He concludes his survey by expressing a hope 'that the present tendency to treat the old belief of man with a precipitate, shallow, and unexamining disparagement, is simply a distemper that infects for a time the moral atmosphere; that is

due, like plagues and fevers, to our own previous folly and neglect; and that, when it has served its work of admonition and reform, will be allowed to pass away. Towards this result the author of *Ecce Homo*, if I read him right, will have the consolation and the praise of having furnished an earnest, powerful, and original contribution.' Seldom has the work to be effected in man by the Christian religion been so felicitously expressed as in the following passage:—

'No more in the inner than the outer sphere did Christ come among us as a conqueror, making His appeal to force. We were neither to be consumed by the heat of the Divine presence, nor were we to be dazzled by its brightness; God was not in the storm, nor in the fire, nor in the flood, but He was in the still small voice. This vast treasure was not only to be conveyed to us, and to be set down as it were at our doors; it was to enter into us, to become part of us, and to become that part which should rule the rest; it was to assimilate alike the mind and heart of every class and description of men. While, as a moral system, it aimed at an entire dominion in the heart, this dominion was to be founded upon an essential conformity to the whole of our original and true essence. It, therefore, recognised the freedom of man, and respected his understanding, even while it absolutely required him both to learn and to unlearn so largely; the whole of the new lessons were founded upon principles that were based in the deepest and best regions of his nature, and that had the sanction of his highest faculties in their moments of calm, and in circumstances of impartiality. The work was one of restoration, of return, and of enlargement, not of innovation. A space was to be bridged over, and it was vast: but a space where all the piers, and every foundation-stone of the connecting structure, were to be laid in the reason and common-sense, in the history and experience of man. This movement was to be a revolutionary movement, but only in the sense of a return from anarchy to order.'

The remaining essays of an historical and ecclesiastical type are 'The Courses of Religious Thought,' 'The Sixteenth Century and the Nineteenth,' and 'The Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion'—

the main argument of the last-named paper being suggested by Sir G. C. Lewis's well-known essay upon the same subject.

In the Foreign essays are to be found the letters to Lord Aberdeen on the Neapolitan prisons, which have been already referred to at length in another part of this work. In an article upon 'Germany, France, and England,' contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, in 1870, Mr. Gladstone pleads for the time when nations shall do to each other as they would wish to be done by. 'The greatest triumph of our time, a triumph in a region loftier than that of electricity and steam, will be the enthronement of the idea of Public Right, as the governing idea of European policy; as the common and precious inheritance of all lands, but superior to the passing opinion of any. The foremost among the nations will be that one, which by its conduct shall gradually engender in the mind of the others a fixed belief that it is just. In the competition for this prize, the bounty of Providence has given us a place of vantage; and nothing save our own fault or folly can wrest it from our grasp.' Dealing with 'The Hellenic Factor in the Eastern Problem,' Mr. Gladstone traces the course of British policy with respect to Greece, and redeems the memory of Lord Palmerston from the wrong done it by those who believe or argue that, if now alive, he would have been found to plead the obligation of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Power as paramount to the duty of granting to her afflicted

subjects simple, broad, and effective guarantees for their personal and civil liberties. In no spirit of unfriendliness to the Porte, Earl Russell and Lord Palmerston wished for the assignment of Thessaly and Epirus to Greece, subject to the conditions of suzerain and tribute. Mr. Gladstone shows that there is an opportunity for England to acquire the lasting gratitude of Greece. 'Of that people who still fondle in their memories the names of Canning and Byron, there are in the Levant, we may safely say, four millions, on whose affections we may take a standing hold, by giving a little friendly care at this juncture to the case of the Hellenic provinces. They want not Russian institutions, but such a freedom as we enjoy. They want for their cause an advocate who is not likely to turn into an adversary; one whose temptations lie in other quarters; who cannot (as they fondly trust) ask anything from them; or, in any possible contingency, through durable opposition of sympathies or interests, inflict anything upon them.' Such a thorough and steadfast friend England has not yet proved herself. Mr. Gladstone relates, in another article, the long struggle of the noble and heroic people of Montenegro against their hereditary oppressors; and he has further something to say anent 'Aggression in Egypt, and Freedom in the East.'* He

* Egypt may yet prove a source of serious difficulty to England. It was stated in a communication to the *Times* from Alexandria, dated Aug. 24, 1879, that when Ismail Pasha was still Viceroy of Egypt, and was being pressed to sign his abdication, he used these words:—'You English have made a mistake; whatever I have been or done, I made English interests

does not hide the difficulties besetting British encroachments in the East. Enlargements of the empire are for us an evil fraught with serious if not with immediate danger. We have left many old tasks undone; 'our currency, our local government, our liquor laws, portions even of our taxation, remain in a state either positively discreditable, or at the least inviting and demanding great improvements; but, for want of time and strength, we cannot handle them. For the romance of political travel we are ready to scour the world, and yet of capital defect in duties lying at our door we are not ashamed.' By way of reply to the fears and arguments of those who advocate the strengthening of our position in the East, Mr. Gladstone does not believe that Russian power on the Bosphorus is a practical possibility. But if the worst came to the worst, and Russia accomplished the designs attributed to her, and stopped also the Suez Canal, she would have done nothing more than introduce an average delay of about three weeks into our military communications with Bombay, and less with Calcutta. In time of war, this would not make the difference to us between life and death in the maintenance of our Indian Empire.

Mr. Gladstone's position on Ritualism, and his

in Egypt paramount. You have the railways, the customs, the post-office, the telegraphs, and the ports entirely under English administration. To gain more you have called in the French. You then hesitated, and Bismarck, who looks far ahead, pushed you on till you have come to direct intervention. Mark my words, Bismarck sees what I see, that Egypt will become the Schleswig-Holstein of England and France.'

answer to the question whether the Church of England is worth preserving, have already been defined in a previous chapter. He has reprinted the essays in which he expounded his views on these questions in two volumes, which also contain papers entitled 'Remarks on the Royal Supremacy,' 'Present Aspect of the Church, 1843,' 'Ward's Ideal of a Christian Church,' 'On the Functions of Laymen in the Church,' 'The Bill for Divorce,' and 'Italy and her Church.' These essays are undoubtedly valuable as affording materials to add to the general stock 'from which the religious history of a critical period will have finally to be written.' They do not, however, possess the same general interest as the volume of miscellaneous essays which succeeds them. This volume includes the admirable Inaugural Address delivered to the students of Edinburgh University in 1860; the address on the Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order; a Chapter of Autobiography; Probability as a Guide of Conduct, and the very entertaining narrative of the parentage, progress, and issue of the Evangelical movement in England.* Mr. Gladstone's strength does not lie in discovering and exposing the deep roots of those great principles which have governed the growth of nations in the various ages of the world; he rather, by graphic and picturesque antithesis, illustrates the outer effects and manifestations of those principles in national

* This article on the Evangelical movement in England originally appeared in the *British Quarterly Review*.

life. Take, for example, this comparison between Greece and Palestine, extracted from the essay on the Place of Ancient Greece:—

'For the exercises of strength and skill, for the achievements and for the enchantments of wit, of eloquence, of art, of genius, for the imperial games of politics and war—let us seek them on the shores of Greece. But if the first among the problems of life be how to establish the peace and restore the balance of our inward being; if the highest of all conditions in the existence of the creature be his aspect towards the God to whom he owes his being, and in whose great hand he stands; then let us make our search elsewhere. All the wonders of the Greek civilisation heaped together are less wonderful than is the single Book of Psalms. Palestine was weak and despised, always obscure, oftentimes and long trodden down beneath the feet of imperious masters. On the other hand, Greece, for a thousand years,

"Confident from foreign purposes,"

repelled every invader from her shores. Fostering her strength in the keen air of freedom, she defied, and at length overthrew, the mightiest of existing empires; and when finally she felt the resistless grasp of the masters of all the world, them too, at the very moment of their subjugation, she herself subdued to her literature, language, arts, and manners. Palestine, in a word, had no share of the glories of our race; while they blaze on every page of the history of Greece with an overpowering splendour. Greece had valour, policy, reason, genius, wisdom, wit; she had all, in a word, that this world could give her; but the flowers of Paradise, which blossom at the best but thinly, blossomed in Palestine alone.'

One article by Mr. Gladstone—which does not appear in the collected edition of his essays, on account of its political and controversial character—still claims attention. It does so on the ground of its exposition of the writer's views as to the dangers attendant upon an Imperial policy. This article is entitled 'England's Mission.'* The writer is alarmed

* See the *Nineteenth Century* for September, 1878.

by recent developments of English statesmanship. He maintains that 'not peace, not humanity, not reverence for the traditions established by the thought and care of the mighty dead, not anxiety to secure the equal rights of nations, not the golden rule to do to others as we would fain have them do to us, not far-seeing provision for the future, have been the sources from which the present Ministers have drawn their strength.' On the contrary, 'they are the men, and the political heirs of the men, who passed the Six Acts and the Corn Laws; who impoverished the population, who fettered enterprise by legislative restraint, who withheld those franchises that have given voice and vent to the public wishes, whose policy in a word kept the Throne insecure and the empire weak; and would, unless happily arrested in 1832, and again in 1846, have plunged the country into revolution.' They have abandoned all idea, such as inspired Sir Robert Peel, that Government should live by great measures of legislation framed for the national benefit, and have substituted a careful regard to interest and class, from bishops down to beer-houses. This inglorious existence being unable to bear the concentrated force of criticism, however, they sought out a vigorous foreign policy. The first care of the Liberal party has been held to be the care of her own children within her own shores, the redress of wrongs, the supply of needs, the improvements of laws and institutions; but against this doctrine, 'the present Government appears to set up territorial

aggrandisement, large establishments, and the accumulation of a multitude of fictitious interests abroad, as if our real interests were not enough.' Mr. Gladstone deprecates the multiplication of British possessions beyond sea, and especially condemns such acquisitions as that of Cyprus, which can never become truly British in character. As every possible road to India threatens to become a British interest, he observes that there is no saying what preposterous guarantees may be proposed for Khiva, or Bokhara, or Badakshan. Nay, as China is a possible road to India, why should it not also have a guarantee? All the old doctrines of statesmanship which should have been jealously guarded by Ministers have been left to the advocacy of unofficial persons. The writer maintains that the Government have, on the whole, opened up and relied on an illegitimate source of power; and that one of the damning signs of the politics of the school is their total blindness to the fact that the central strength of England lies in England. He further complains that 'we have undertaken in the matter of Governments far more than ever in the history of the world has been previously attempted by the children of men. None of the great continuous empires of ancient or modern times ever grappled with such a task.' Meanwhile, during the prevalence of this lust of empire, what has become of domestic legislation? Mr. Gladstone supplies the following list of questions not (so far) grappled with, and 'the neglect of which amounts,

in not a few instances, to positive scandal:'—London Municipal Reform; County Government; County Franchise; Liquor Laws; Irish Borough Franchise; Irish University Question; Opium Revenue; Criminal Law Procedure; Responsibility of Masters for Injuries to Workmen; Reduction of Public Expenditure; Probate Duty; Indian Finance; Working of the Home Government of India; City Companies; Burial Laws; Valuation of Property; Law of the Medical Profession; Law of Entail and Settlement; Corrupt Practices at Elections; Expenses of Election; Reorganisation of the Revenue Departments; and the Currency. In a later article, entitled 'The Country and the Government,' Mr. Gladstone added to these subjects waiting to be dealt with, the Laws of Bankruptcy, of Banking, of Distress, of Charities and Mortmain, Loans for Local Purposes, Game, Distribution as well as Redistribution of Seats, Savings Bank Finance, and the Bright Clauses of the Irish Land Act. Instead of dealing with these matters, the Government of Lord Beaconsfield had raised up as from a virgin soil a whole forest of new questions, in themselves enough to occupy a Parliament and a State which had nothing else to do. Of these new and thorny subjects, he gave the following enumeration, which, while probably incomplete, might suffice for present purposes:—1. Eastern Roumelia; 2. The Greek Frontier; 3. Crete and the other European Provinces of Turkey; 4. The Armenians; 5. Turkey in Asia; 6. Cyprus; 7. Suez Canal Shares

and Management; 8. Egyptian Debt; 9. Egyptian Succession; 10. North-west Frontier of India; 11. Supervision of Afghanistan; 12. East Indian Finance; 13. Arms Act, Press Act, and Taxing Legislation of India; 14. Cape—Annexation of the Transvaal: the act of the present Administration; and 15. Cape—Zulu War: the result of the mission of Sir Bartle Frere. Of these, the first three come under the Treaty of Berlin; the fourth, fifth, and sixth under the Anglo-Turkish Convention; the seventh, eighth, and ninth are assumed to result from the purchase of shares in the Suez Canal; while the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth result from the mission of Lord Lytton. After reviewing the home and foreign policy of the Government, the right hon. gentleman compared its claims with those of its predecessor, and said that though there had been times when men of ardent minds had complained that they could scarcely distinguish between one party and another, assuredly no such complaint could now be made, and the nation must choose between them in the light afforded by the experience of the last six years.

Mr. Gladstone has supplemented this indictment by other charges in a speech at Chester.* He maintained, as he had assured the electors of Midlothian, that at no period of his public life had the issues inviting the judgment of the nation been of such profound importance—including the manage-

* Delivered August 19, 1879.

ment of finance, the scale of expenditure, and the constantly growing arrears of legislation—as now. 'I hold,' he continued, 'that the faith and honour of the country have been gravely compromised by the foreign policy of the Ministry; that by the disturbance of confidence, and lately even of peace, which they have brought about, they have prolonged and aggravated public distress; that they have augmented the power and interest of the Russian Empire, even while estranging the feelings of its population; that they have embarked the Crown and people in an unjust war; that their Afghan war is full of mischief, if not of positive danger, to India; and that by their use of the treaty-making and war-making powers of the Crown they have abridged the just rights of Parliament, and have presented its prerogatives to the nation under an unconstitutional aspect, which tends to make it insecure.' Mr. Gladstone added that these were the characters he had inscribed on his colours, and he had nailed them to the mast. He again reiterated his charge that the Ministry had played the game of Russia, and had enabled her to take the part which belonged to our forefathers—and which ought to have belonged to us—that of promoting the interests of liberty and justice. Further, although it was perfectly well known that we had invaded the country of the Zulus, Lord Salisbury, the Foreign Secretary—who ought to be among the best informed men—had lately announced that we

had engaged in a war in South Africa which was brought upon us in order to repel an attack made by savages upon our colonial dominions. It was coolly asserted by a responsible Minister of the Crown that the people of the country which we invaded invaded us! The Zulus, denounced as savages by Lord Salisbury, showed us an evidence of the right feeling which was rather to have been expected from a Christian people, and refused to cross the little thread of a stream that separated their land from ours, being simply contented to await within their own territories a renewal of our wanton, unprovoked, mischievous, and deplorable attacks. Describing our latest acquisition, Mr. Gladstone said, 'You know what Cyprus is. It is a small island, but it is a great imposture.' In that great and wonderful arsenal which was to contain an army that would frighten Russia out of its wits, there were now three hundred English soldiers, and so inadequate were they even to the duty of keeping the people in order that, notwithstanding the promise given that Cyprus should not cost a shilling for civil government, one of the last acts of the Administration had been to carry a vote through Parliament for the support of the civil police of the island. With regard to financial matters, Mr. Gladstone said that at the beginning of the year the deficiency stood at six millions sterling, and there would be a deficiency of three and a half millions more at the end of the financial year. It

would be a great stroke for the Government if they could postpone the presentation of the bill for expenses until after the dissolution. From the Liberal party had proceeded all the measures which had made the country so great and so strong, that had led to the prosperity which lasted in an unbroken term for such a number of years until this crisis had arrived—a crisis so unhappily prolonged and aggravated as the present crisis had been unhappily prolonged and aggravated by the financial extravagance of the Government, and by that want of confidence which they had introduced into their relations with the different countries of the globe. When the dissolution came, if they did their duty, there was no fear for the Liberals.

This address by the ex-Premier, delivered in his seventieth year, exhibited all the energy and vigour usually associated with a political chief of fifty. It demonstrated that, though he had retired from the leadership of his party, he answered the call to. the political battle as the war-horse scents the conflict from afar.

A final word remains to be said upon the Anglo-Turkish Convention and the Ministerial policy generally. The acquisition of Cyprus was Lord Beaconsfield's set-off against the territorial cessions to Russia under the Treaty of Berlin. It was deemed necessary for England to do something at this juncture, and, to obtain Cyprus, the Premier even pledged England to that immense responsibility (whose results no man

can possibly foresee), the Protectorate over the Turkish dominions in Asia. Lord Beaconsfield had fixed his attention upon Cyprus some time before its cession to Great Britain, for Lord Derby, in explaining the reasons for his secession from the Cabinet, said, 'When I quitted the Cabinet I did so mainly because it was said that it was necessary to secure a naval station in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean; and that, for that purpose, it was necessary to seize and occupy the island of Cyprus, together with a point upon the Syrian coast. That was to be done by means of a Syrian expedition sent out from India, with or without the consent of the Sultan.' The Premier has not only pursued a policy now widely recognised under the term 'Imperial,' but he has pursued this policy in secret, and has shown so great a contempt for Parliamentary and constitutional usage as to take little thought for the nation, or its representatives in the House of Commons. For some time back, however, the sinister effects of this policy have been in process of demonstration, and the country is beginning to ask whether the vast concerns of this great empire should continue practically to remain at the will and disposal of one man. We have—as all must have—a genuine admiration for Lord Beaconsfield's talents and genius; but we have arrived at so grave a crisis in our national history that it becomes the duty of every man to speak out, and with no uncertain voice. What would Pym, Hampden, and their compatriots have said to

the system of government which now prevails in England? Yet the Premier is not wholly, though chiefly, responsible for this. The country should remember that he would have been powerless but for the support of a majority of the House of Commons; and in order to destroy personal government, the nation must change its representatives. The results of recent policy have been thus described by Mr. Gladstone:—'There is not a nation upon earth with which we have drawn the bonds of friendship closer by the transactions of these last years, but we have played perilous tricks with the loyalty of India, have estranged the ninety millions who inhabit Russia, and have severed ourselves from the Christians of Turkey, Greek and Slav alike, without gaining the respect of the Moslem. And all this we have done, not to increase our power, but only our engagements.' A statesman who neglects every home interest to boast of our power before other nations; who enters upon engagements lightly, and without thinking of the enormous responsibilities they must devolve upon us in the future; who enacts the swashbuckler in foreign politics, and endeavours to flatter us by a sense of our own grandeur—such a statesman, whatever may be his claims in other respects, is to be dreaded as the most dangerous foe that England could possess.

We have now reached the close of our survey of Mr. Gladstone's literary and political career. In both aspects the average reader seems to toil after him

in vain, so great is his fertility in resource, so extraordinary his power of seizing upon and comprehending the facts and bearings of our foreign and domestic policy, so copious and inexhaustible the eloquence with which he illustrates and enforces his views—whether those views relate to the immortal works of Homer, the scandals of the Neapolitan prisons, the questions raised by *Ecce Homo*, the details of the last budget, the principles which should pervade industrial art, the dogmas of the Romish Church, the duty of man in relation to education and religion, or the policy of the Beaconsfield Administration. The strength and vehemence of his denunciations of the Government—as we have already had occasion to remark—have been sometimes severely commented upon; but, without defending his addresses in every particular, it may be observed that strong language is sometimes called for in English politics, provided it be just. Moreover, in addition to the force which Mr. Gladstone's addresses have always derived from the natural ardour of his temperament, they owe much of their polemical character to the firm and settled conviction of the ex-Premier—that the policy of Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry has been derogatory to the honour and interests of England, at home and abroad.

CHAPTER XXX.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS—CONCLUSION.

Mr. Gladstone and the Movements of the Time—Personal Characteristics—His Religious Feeling—His Oratory—Its Scope, Variety, and Character—The ex-Premier's studious Habits—Surprising intellectual Labours—Nature of his Pursuits at Hawarden—Miscellaneous Traits—Relations with the Sovereign—Principal Features of his Public Career—His Strength as a Statesman—Mr. Gladstone and the Future of the Liberal Party.

A BIOGRAPHY of the greatest Commoner of his time would be incomplete without some reference to his personal characteristics. We have had English statesmen whose claims to remembrance have been confined to their eminent political services, and who, beyond those limits, have scarcely possessed a personality in the eyes of their countrymen. With Mr. Gladstone the case is wholly different. In almost every movement of the age he has been a participant, whether that movement be social, scientific, philanthropic, political, or religious; while at some point or other his sentiments and sympathies have impinged upon those of every class in the State. His life, in fact, has been larger and fuller than that of any of his contemporaries; and England will fail to realise in how great a degree his name is inextricably interwoven with the history of the past forty years, until his eloquence is silent, and his presence withdrawn from her midst.

The ex-Premier is not only the most versatile orator, the most brilliant debater, and the foremost member of Parliament of his age, but is pre-eminently a Christian statesman. The golden thread of Christian principle runs through all his utterances. There are many conscientious men who would have us believe that they have sounded the heights and depths of Christianity, and found it a superstition and a fable—men by whom religion is accounted at variance with scientific and intellectual progress; yet its power is the deepest and greatest over the individual which the world has ever seen, and let no man contemn or despise its influence upon the national life. Those who divorce politics from morality doubtless see in an unswerving religious belief a hindrance to the development of a statesman in the questionable paths of chicane and diplomacy; and there is another class who—while not going so far—still look askance upon a too rigid adherence to principle in political matters. But Mr. Gladstone has invariably 'worn his heart upon his sleeve,' and disposed for ever of the idea that tortuousness and subterfuge are necessary to the successful political leader. In these degenerate days, when we may almost adopt, politically, the language of the Prince of Denmark, and say, 'virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,' Mr. Gladstone has demonstrated that simplicity of character, frankness and unreservedness of speech, and moral sensibility are not incompatible with true political greatness.

Not content with battling against forms of error,

and insisting upon the supreme importance of religious truth, the ex-Premier is amongst those who believe in Christianity as a living, vitalising force in the individual, and he has endeavoured practically to illustrate its influence. Those who are most severed from him in these matters will at least do deference to his convictions. His deep and unaffected piety has won for him the esteem of all the various religious bodies with whom he has been brought into contact; and it is stated that 'even when Prime Minister of England he has been found in the humblest houses, reading to the sick or dying consolatory passages of Scripture in his own soft melodious tones.' His earliest friends, Manning, Bishop Hamilton, William Palmer, Henry Wilberforce, and others, were of a like type with himself; and had Fortune so willed it, it is not impossible that he who became the first of Liberal statesmen might have become equally illustrious as a divine. Into his private life we shall not enter, but we may mention an incident which occurred some years ago as illustrative of this side of his character. The late Bishop of Winchester was under a promise to give an address to the divinity students of King's College, but failing to attend on account of ill-health, Mr. Gladstone, at an hour's notice, took his place. His address on that occasion has been described to us by one who heard it as earnest and impassioned. Though not an actual sermon, it was based upon the phrase in the Epistle to the Romans, 'The Righteousness which

is by faith.' The character of that address—to adopt the language of another listener, and one whom it touched into a nobler view of the reality of life and its higher aims—indicated that the speaker possessed the elements of a great preacher. In enumerating the factors which go to make up Mr. Gladstone's influence over his countrymen, the moral and spiritual element must not be forgotten, superfluous as it may appear to some in the sphere of political life.

Of his oratory we have already spoken, but something yet remains to be said of its character and variety. Even while but a youthful speaker at the Oxford Union, we are assured that the earnestness and intensity of his language and bearing were sometimes painful; 'conviction was stamped on every word he uttered.' Yet he was by no means always confident in his own powers. After the speech which virtually turned out the Derby-Disraeli Ministry of 1852, he was asked by Bunsen why he did not speak oftener, when he replied that he was withheld by mistrust in himself, lest he should find too much difficulty in keeping within Christian bounds of moderation in endeavouring to utter faithfully the truth, and yet avoid all that might be construed into personality. This very earnestness, it will be remembered, at a later period caused Mr. Disraeli to rejoice that there was a good substantial piece of furniture between himself and that political Achilles, his opponent. While on this point, we may brush aside the groundless assertion that the ex-Premier has of late years regarded

Lord Beaconsfield with a personal antipathy. Such is not the case: as Mr. Gladstone himself has stated, 'antipathy is not a word he can admit or recognise as describing his attitude at any time.' A fine tribute to Mr. Gladstone's oratory is paid in Bunsen's *Memoirs*. After describing the young English statesman as the first man in England as regards intellectual power, and one who has heard higher tones than anyone else in this island, Bunsen furnishes this reminiscence of his friend, who, at the time referred to, was but thirty-two years of age:—'At a dinner at the Star and Garter, Richmond, Mr. Gladstone proposed the toast, "Prosperity to the Church of St. James at Jerusalem, and to her first Bishop." Never was heard a more exquisite speech—it flowed like a gentle and translucent stream. As in the second portion he addressed Alexander directly, representing the greatness and difficulty of the charge confided to him, the latter at first covered his face from emotion, but then rose and returned thanks with dignity as well as feeling.' Subsequently, it is added, 'we drove back to town in the clearest starlight, Gladstone continuing with unabated animation to pour forth harmonious thoughts in melodious tone.'

Of recent years the ex-Premier's oratory has been almost unlimited in scope and variety. In addition to the speeches and addresses already specified in their order in the course of this work, it may be mentioned as illustrating his gifts of speech that he has at one time lectured with much critical acumen upon Sir

Walter Scott; at another addressed in homely language —yet withal blending the useful and the noble in its sentiments—the aged paupers in St. Pancras Workhouse; upon a third occasion he has urged the claims of Eastern research and exploration, of which he is a warm advocate; on a fourth he has discoursed usefully and profitably upon garden cultivation to the Hawarden Horticultural Society; and on a fifth he has addressed an assembly of Nonconformist divines at the City Temple. Nor have we even yet exhausted the list of his addresses. His voice is of itself a great gift, being rich, full, and sonorous. Speaking generally of his oratory, in certain individual respects he is inferior to Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Bright, but his eloquence altogether has greater breadth, force, and versatility than that of any of his contemporaries. The memory of other speeches may grow faint, but the effect of many of Mr. Gladstone's Parliamentary orations must remain indelibly stamped upon the minds of those who heard them. While he has a powerful fund of sarcasm, and is not destitute of a certain kind of humour, who can equal him in comprehensiveness, in mastery of detail, in moral fervour, and intensity of feeling? He has captivated alike the learned and the illiterate, causing both to thrill beneath the spell of his impassioned and irresistible periods. While the mellifluous flow of his language has charmed the intellect, the elevation of his sentiments has touched the spirit of his auditors, and quickened into vitality the higher emotions of humanity.

The extent of Mr. Gladstone's daily intellectual labours has been matter of very general surprise. That which he has accomplished was, indeed, only possible under strict rule and method. From his earliest years of study each day has seen fulfilled its due share of work. At Oxford he was an exception to undergraduate life, and 'did not break off his morning studies at the regulation luncheon hour of one o'clock. It mattered not where he was, in college rooms or in country mansion; from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. no one ever saw William Ewart Gladstone. He was locked up with his books. From the age of eighteen to the age of twenty-one he never missed these precious four hours except when he was travelling. And his ordeal in the evening was not less severe. Eight o'clock saw him once more engaged in a stiff bout with Aristotle, or plunged deep in the text of Thucydides.' The habit of assimilating knowledge has been constant with him, in all places and at all seasons, from the first day of his college life until now. He has always been an early man, and—quoting now from an interesting article which appeared shortly after Mr. Gladstone's resignation of the Liberal leadership—'since his retirement in Flintshire he is, if possible, earlier than before. Shortly after eight o'clock in the morning he walks down to prayers in the village church. Early devotion and breakfast over, the remainder of the morning, till the gong sounds at two o'clock, is devoted to work—to reading, writing, meditation, or

to the performance of arithmetical feats which no Cabinet Minister has ever surpassed.' Luncheon over, there is more reading; or, 'if there be visitors in the house, pleasant gossip; or, if the weather be tempting, long walks to be taken, or tough oaks to be hewn. Loving air and exercise, Mr. Gladstone is a singularly temperate man in meat and drink. Still, he is only abstemious, not ascetic. A glass or two of claret at dinner, and sometimes a glass of port, that nectar of orators, satisfy his very moderate requirements for stimulant.' His recreation in retirement is such as befits a strong and muscular frame. Mr. Gladstone wields the axe with the skill of an experienced workman. 'Sawing wood has long been known as an excellent exercise, but it is dull work compared with the pleasure of striking at a huge tree, putting out of question the possibility of mentally coupling with each well-aimed blow the destruction of a political opponent. In wood-cutting *déshabillé*, so little does the lord of the soil look like himself that he has often been accosted by "practical" hands, and received, meekly as is his wont, a lesson from them, the practical man remaining all the while ignorant of the manner of man he was addressing. In his moments of mental and physical relaxation, the Napoleon of oratory (whose heavy artillery is always brought up at the right moment) and the champion of amateur woodmen vanish into the genial host, whose high spirits break out at every moment, and who is never more rejoiced than when he can

play a comedy part on his own or his son's lawn.' Further, it has been observed that the frank and free manner of Mr. Gladstone, his liberality in throwing open Hawarden Park to the public, and the deep interest he takes in all local improvements, 'have made him one of the best beloved of English celebrities. On Sunday morning, as the bells of Hawarden Church ring out through the heavy autumn air, vigorous pedestrians may be observed marching up the hill, their dusty raiment and shiny countenances proclaiming that their walk to church has been a long one. This determination towards Hawarden as a place of devotion is not owing to a dearth of churches in the neighbourhood. There are churches at Mold and elsewhere, but in none of these are the lessons read in the sonorous tones of the ex-Premier of England.'

There are yet other traits to be mentioned. Mr. Gladstone's personal charity is proverbial, but his generosity has not been bounded by pecuniary limits. When oppressed with the cares of State he has turned aside to tender counsel and advice in a thousand ways to those who have desired it, and this when time has been his most precious possession. Nor has he served the State at all selfishly: when Prime Minister he resisted a motion for increase of salary in the House of Commons, and when he left office he sought for no pension, although the numerous claims upon him were understood to have compelled the sale of his very remarkable collection of valuable china and

articles of virtu. Those who know him best can best speak of his self-denial and complete unselfishness; but as a proof of his independence of spirit we may mention one incident which is worthy of record in connection with this servant of the people. We have reason to believe that when he retired from office, and made an investigation into the condition of his affairs, Mr. Gladstone discovered that the house in Carlton House Terrace, which he had inhabited for eighteen years, was beyond his means. He therefore parted with it, and obtained a smaller house in Harley Street. This change from a roomy mansion to one comparatively humble, entailed almost as a necessary consequence parting with his collections, though, as we have seen, this was also part of the prudential plan. The loss of his collections—the gradual accumulation of years—must to the ex-Premier have been a great one, for his lively appreciation of art has not been confined to public addresses on that subject: books, china, and pictures are treasures which he has ever regarded with peculiar affection, and which he has always delighted to have around him in lavish profusion. Severely simple in his tastes, courteous to the very humblest in the social scale, ceaseless in his intellectual labours, unswerving in his adherence to principle, and untiring in his efforts for the public welfare—such is the character—not drawn by the pen of flattery—of the Ulysses of the Liberal party.

Touching Mr. Gladstone's relations with the Sovereign, on every occasion when he has had the

honour to serve the Queen, and to be thrown into personal intercourse with her, her Majesty has been full of kindness and condescension both towards himself and the members of his family. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to state that the honours and rewards which in England follow long and distinguished political service would have been willingly conferred upon Mr. Gladstone by his gracious Sovereign and Mistress; he has chosen, however, to remain one of the people, and by the people he continues to be regarded as the most illustrious ornament of the House of Commons.

We now approach the conclusion of our task. In Mr. Gladstone's career may be traced a natural progression, marked and definite, from the first of his recorded utterances to the last. With a mind plastic as the age itself, it was impossible for him to stand still. Yet every great accession of conviction has cost him public and private throes of which those who charge him with fickleness and inconstancy know but little. The selfish and the unprincipled may claim the merit due to a rigid adherence to principle, but it is the principle of self. The man who labours for others—be it in the political or any other sphere—must prepare for the changing tides of circumstance—must 'know the seasons when to take occasion by the hand.' In finance as in general legislation, Mr. Gladstone's policy has been far-seeing and adapted to the expanding needs of the time. Amongst all the great financial and legislative reforms which owe their

initiation to him, and which are now accomplished facts, his bitterest enemies cannot lay their finger upon one conspicuous failure; while he has done more for the internal prosperity of the Empire than any statesman since Sir Robert Peel. More than this; he has been a leader of the people in the highest and truest sense. The welfare of the nation—both in its material and moral aspect—has been his paramount consideration and desire; and we witness in the self-denying efforts of his life not so much

'The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,'

but

'The more noble instinct that aspires.

We care not what their party designation be; but it is such men who raise the science of politics above the level of the huckster and the charlatan, and invest it with grandeur and dignity.

When Mr. Gladstone resigned the Liberal leadership, the Conservative organs in the press predicted that either the Liberal party would break up, and its more moderate section join the moderate section of the Conservatives, or that it would be once more welded together by considerable questions being mooted on which all sections of the party could agree. Neither of the alternatives of this prophecy has yet been completely realised; but the second prediction is in course of fulfilment. It is yet in Mr. Gladstone's power to do more towards accomplishing this end than any other Liberal statesman. But the party and its leaders

must speak with certain and united voice, and promulgate a definite policy. We have described the ex-Premier as the Ulysses of the Liberal party. Shall we hear him yet again address those whom he has so often led to victory, in the stirring language which a modern poet has put into the mouth of the King of Ithaca?—

> 'Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
> That ever with a frolic welcome took
> The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
> Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
> Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
> Death closes all: but something ere the end,
> Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
> Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
>
> Come, my friends,
> 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.'*

Mr. Gladstone has attacked the foreign policy of the Government with a copiousness of eloquence almost unparalleled. This he has a perfect right to do; and he might naturally protest against the newly-invented doctrine that in times of crisis all criticism of the action of the Executive must be suppressed. It is the duty of an Opposition—be it Liberal or Conservative—to censure and expose the policy of any government, when it believes such policy is fraught with danger to the highest interests of England. Lord Beaconsfield did this—and with perfect justice so far as the act is concerned—during the Crimean war, and at other momentous periods. Mr.

* Tennyson's *Ulysses*.

Gladstone's indictment is before the country in all its fulness; let the Liberal leaders, while not neglecting our true interests abroad, now turn to that which is their greatest strength, viz., domestic legislation. When the public expenditure has risen from £71,000,000, or thereabouts, and a surplus in the late Premier's time, to £85,000,000 and a deficit in that of his successors, the Liberals have a most potent argument with the electors. For good or for evil the wars so vigorously condemned have been waged; the question now is, will the country endorse these wars and the enormous additions they involve to the public burdens, by renewing its confidence in the Government, or will it again turn to that party which is chiefly associated with the peace, the progress, and the prosperity of the Empire?

Notwithstanding the step of 1874, and Mr. Gladstone's subsequent retirement, and notwithstanding the errors charged upon the ex-Premier by his opponents, it is the feeling of thousands of Liberals throughout the country that, whenever the Liberal party becomes once more thoroughly united—with a programme before it worthy of its achievements in the past—there is but one possible statesman who must be largely responsible for conducting its enterprises to a successful issue. Legislation never stands still; and when disastrous wars—still disastrous even when most successful—have once more ceased to mark the course of British policy, great questions will press forward for settlement. Would it be surprising, when

this period shall have arrived—and a statesman is demanded who shall be able to carry through Parliament, in obedience to the popular will, those great measures of domestic reform which cannot be much longer delayed—that there should arise unbidden to the lips of the people the name of Mr. Gladstone? It may, of course, be possible that his great legislative achievements have already reached their end, that he may not again take the chief control of affairs, or that the country may continue to support the Conservative Administration; but if there should be a revival of political power for the Opposition, accompanied by a demand for such legislation as we have indicated, the Liberal party—interpreting now, as we have said, the sentiments of the bulk of that party—must inevitably turn for its real, though not, possibly, for its nominal, chief to the statesman who has rendered his past Administration and its acts memorable in the annals of the country. When the bow of Ulysses requires to be bent, only Ulysses can bend it.

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